



PRESS STATEMENT (For Immediate Release)

HYDROLOGICAL SITUATION OF THE KARIBA CATCHMENT AT KARIBA DAM

Lusaka, 6th March 2024 – The Zambezi River Authority (the Authority) hereby informs the public in the two Contracting States (the Republics of Zambia and Zimbabwe) that in line with its mandate, it has continued to closely monitor the hydrological outlook of the Kariba Catchment and hereby provides the following update.

Zambezi River Flows at Chavuma

The Zambezi River flows at one of the key Zam bezi River flows monitoring gauging stations, the Chavuma gauging station, rose from a flow of 350m³/s recorded on 1st January 2024, registering a peak flow of 530m³/s recorded on 23rd January 2024, after which the flows have receded down to 357m³/s recorded on **6th March 2024**, compared to the flow of 992m³/s recorded on **6th March 2023**.

Zambezi River Flows at Victoria Falls

The Zambezi River flows at Victoria Falls rose from 492 m³/s recorded on 1st January 2024, to a flow of 800 m³/s recorded on 4th March 2024 after which the flows have been receding, subsequently recording a flow of 794m³/s on **6th March 2024**, compared to the flow of 2,569m³/s recorded on the same date last year.

Kariba Lake Levels

The Lake level rose from a 1st January 2024 recorded level of 477.24m with 7.80 Billion Cubic Meters (BCM) of stored usable water, representing a live storage of 12%, to 477.87m with 10.68 BCM of stored usable water or 16.49% live storage recorded on 29th January 2024. During the first week of the month of February 2024, the lake level registered a sluggish increase. It began steadily decreasing thereafter due to low inflow and reduced rainfall activity on and around the lake associated with the below average rainfall received under the 2023/2024 rainfall season in the Kariba catchment. Subsequently, the recorded lake level on **6th March** was 477.66m with 9.72 Billion Cubic Meters (BCM) of stored usable water or 15.00% live storage. On the same date last year, the recorded lake level was slightly higher at 477.68m with 9.81 BCM of stored usable water or 15.15% live storage.

Update of the 2023/2024 Seasonal Rainfall Outlook

To-date, the Kariba Catchment has recorded below-normal rainfall owing to the persisting effects of El Niño weather conditions globally and over the Southern

African region, in particular. According to the predictions published by the 28th meeting of the Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF-28) at the end of January 2024, indications were that the larger part of the Kariba Catchment was likely to receive Normal-To-Below-Normal Rainfall during the peak of the 2023/24 rainy season i.e. February to April 2024. Practically the whole of the Kariba Catchment has received Below-Normal Rainfall and this has been projected to extend to the period between March to May 2024.

As announced in December 2023, based on the rainfall outlook from an ensemble of climate centres of excellence available in Quarter 4 of 2023, the Authority allocated a total of 16 Billion Cubic Meters (BCM) of water for power generation operations at Kariba for the year 2024, to be shared equally between the two Kariba Power Generation Utilities; namely, ZESCO Limited (ZESCO) and Zimbabwe Power Company (ZPC)/Kariba Hydro Power Company (KHPC).

Way Forward

Given that the outcome of the rainfall forecast is generally below normal, the Authority has maintained the 16 BCM water allocation for the year 2024 providing for combined annual average power production of 428MW, shared equally. The water allocation of 8 BCM per power utility, translates into an average power production of 214MW per Utility to the end of March 2024 when the 1st Quarter 2024 hydrological review falls due as per standing operational framework for Kariba dam reservoir operations. The hydrological review will among other factors take into consideration the actual performance of the 2023/2024 rainfall season and the resulting inflows into the lake over the first quarter of the year 2024. The results of the hydrological simulations could result in an increment, reduction or the keeping of the prevailing 2024 water allocation as is.

The Authority will continue monitoring the hydrometeorological performance of the Kariba Catchment as evolving under the prevailing El Niño climate conditions and keep the public informed of any new positive or negative developments. Given that the Kariba inflows are so far below average, with a possibility of registering as one of the lowest on record, the Power Utilities have been advised to maintain strict adherence to their respective water allocation thresholds to sustain generation to the end of the year.

The Zambezi River Authority is a Bi-National organization mandated to contribute to the economic, industrial, and social development of the Republics of Zambia and Zimbabwe by obtaining the greatest possible benefits from the natural advantages offered by the waters of the Zambezi River (between Zambia and Zimbabwe) through the most economical and effective means of providing water for generation of electricity and for other purposes which the Contracting States may decide upon.

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