



PRESS STATEMENT

(For Immediate Release)

UPDATE ON WATER LEVELS AT KARIBA

Lusaka, 6th November 2020 – The Zambezi River Authority hereby wishes to provide an update to the public regarding the water levels at the Kariba Dam.

Projected Rainfall Activity under the 2020/2021 Rainfall Season

The Twenty-Fourth Annual Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF-24) was held virtually from 27th to 28th August 2020 with a view to presenting a consensus outlook for the 2020/2021 rainfall season over the SADC region. SARCOF is a forum of local, regional and international weather experts who meet annually to provide projections of the ensuing rainfall season.

The SARCOF-24 Official Statement indicated that the bulk of the SADC region was likely to receive normal to above-normal rainfall for most of the period between October to December (OND) 2020, with North-Western Angola, the bulk of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, most of Eastern Madagascar, Northern Malawi, Northern Mozambique, Seychelles, United Republic of Tanzania and North-Eastern Zambia where normal to below-normal rainfall was expected.

The January to March (JFM) 2021 period was projected to record normal to above normal rainfall for the entire SADC region. Similarly, the Climate Prediction Center (CPC) of the USA indicated a slight to moderate tilt to favour above-average rainfall over portions of Southern Africa during the period December 2020 through to March 2021.

The downscaled forecasts for Zambia and Zimbabwe also indicated similar conditions with minor variations.

The projections made by the weather experts imply that the Kariba catchment is set to have a higher probability of receiving Normal to Above-Normal Rainfall during the period October to December 2020 and Normal to Above-Normal rains during the period January to March 2021.

Monitoring of River Flows to Inform Reservoir Operations at Kariba

The Authority continues to gather and record daily water level readings at its 14 gauging stations located within the Kariba Catchment area, with the recorded hydrological data utilised in informing reservoir operations at Kariba. The principal gauging stations of Chavuma and Victoria Falls remain pivotal in as far as the gauging of the overall inflows into Lake Kariba is concerned.

Zambezi River Flows as Monitored at Chavuma Gauging Station

The Zambezi River flows recorded at Chavuma have continued to recede as per historical trend, which is seen from the last highest peak flow of 5,825 cubic meters per second (m^3/s) recorded on 6th April 2020 to a river flow of 86 m^3/s recorded on 30th October 2020. The flow further receded to 79 m^3/s recorded on 6th November 2020.

The recorded flow on 6th November 2020, is 68.1% higher than the flow of 47 m^3/s recorded last year on the same date.

Zambezi River Flows as Monitored at Victoria Falls Gauging Station

Zambezi River flows monitored at Victoria Falls are equally still receding from the last highest peak of 4,568 m^3/s recorded on 3rd May 2020 to a river flow of 306 m^3/s recorded on 30th October 2020. As at 6th November 2020, the flow had receded to 304 m^3/s .

The recorded flow on 6th November 2020, is 111% higher than the flow of 144 m^3/s recorded last year on the same date, and 19.2% higher than the long-term average flow of 255 m^3/s for this particular gauging station.

Lake Levels Recorded at Kariba

The lake level has continued to steadily recede after attaining a peak level of 481.30 meters(m) on 30th June 2020, with 26.94 Billion Cubic Meters (BCM) of stored usable water (41.57% live storage).

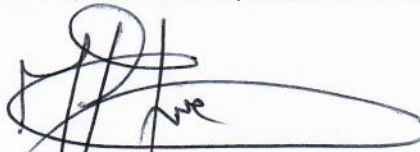
The recorded lake level on 6th November 2020 was 478.97m, with 15.77 BCM of stored usable water (24.34% live storage). This water level put the lake at 3.47 meters(m) above the Minimum Operating Level (MOL) of 475.50m.

Last year on the same date, the lake was only 1.89m above the MOL having registered a lake level of 477.39m with 13.10% of stored usable water.

Water Allocation for Power Generation at Kariba

Following the projected favourable seasonal rainfall outlook for the 2020/21 rainfall season (October 2020 – March 2021) made by weather experts including the local meteorological departments, which could result in slightly above average inflows into Lake Kariba, the Zambezi River Authority has allocated 30 BCM of water for power generation at Kariba Dam to be shared equally between Kariba North Bank Power Station and Kariba South Bank Power Station.

The Authority will continue to monitor the hydrological outlook of the Kariba Catchment and make necessary adjustments in the reservoir operations to ensure continued availability of water for power generation operations at Kariba.



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