PRESS STATEMENT

(For Immediate Release)

UPDATE ON THE HYDROLOGICAL OUTLOOK AT THE KARIBA DAM

Lusaka, 21st July 2026 – The Zambezi River Authority (the Authority) hereby shares an update on the hydrological outlook for the Kariba Catchment, including the status of water levels in the reservoir at Kariba Dam.

Hydrological data recorded by the Authority at its gauging stations across the Kariba Catchment indicates that the 2025/2026 rainfall season, which ended by 30th June 2026, sustained significantly improved hydrological conditions compared to the previous year. Although the reservoir has now passed its seasonal peak and entered the normal dry season drawdown phase, storage levels at Lake Kariba remain considerably higher than during the same period during the year 2025.

Hydrological Data Overview

The river flows recorded at key monitoring points within the Kariba Catchment, including Kariba Dam, Chavuma and Victoria Falls gauging stations, are summarised below:

a) Water Levels at Kariba Dam

The water level in the Kariba Reservoir reached its seasonal peak of 482.21 metres above sea level (31.46 Billion Cubic Metres, 48.55 percent live storage) on 27th June 2026, before beginning its normal seasonal recession. Between 30th June and 21st July 2026, the lake level receded from 482.18 metres above sea level to 482.07 metres above sea level, while live storage decreased from 48.32 percent to 47.47 percent, representing a drawdown of approximately 0.55 Billion Cubic Metres of usable water.

As of 21st July 2026, the lake level stood at approximately 482.07 metres above sea level, while live storage was at approximately 47.47 percent (about 30.76 Billion Cubic Metres of stored usable water). This represents a substantial improvement compared to the same date in 2025, when the reservoir recorded a lake level of 478.91 metres above sea level and live storage of 23.90 percent (about 15.49 Billion Cubic Metres of stored usable water).

The sustained improvement in reservoir storage reflects the cumulative impact of inflows received during the 2025/2026 rainfall season and has resulted in markedly higher storage levels than those recorded during the corresponding period in 2025. Notably, the reservoir level is currently approximately 3.16 metres higher than it was on the same date in 2025.

A summary of the comparative water levels is presented below:

Date	2026			2025		
	MASL	BCM	%	MASL	BCM	%
30th June 2026	482.18	31.31	48.32%	478.93	15.58	24.05%
7th July 2026	482.16	31.21	48.17%	478.99	15.86	24.48%
14th July 2026	482.12	31.01	47.86%	478.97	15.77	24.34%
21st July 2026	482.07	30.76	47.47%	478.91	15.49	23.90%

BCM – Billion Cubic Metres MASL – Metres above sea level

b) Zambezi River Flows Recorded at Chavuma Gauging Station

River flows at the Chavuma Gauging Station continued their gradual seasonal recession during the period under review, reducing from 362 cubic metres per second (m^3/s) on 30th June 2026 to 253 m^3/s on 21st July 2026. This trend remains consistent with the ongoing transition from the rainfall season into the dry season.

On 21st July 2026, flows at Chavuma were recorded at 253 m^3/s, marginally lower than the 257 m^3/s recorded on the same date in 2025, continuing a pattern in which 2026 flows at this station have tracked slightly below the corresponding 2025 figures throughout the period under review.

Below is a Weekly Comparative Chart for Zambezi River Flows Recorded at Chavuma Gauging Station.

Date	2026	2025
30th June 2026	362 m^3/s	371 m^3/s
7th July 2026	321 m^3/s	326 m^3/s
14th July 2026	284 m^3/s	288 m^3/s
21st July 2026	253 m^3/s	257 m^3/s

m^3/s – cubic metres per second

c) Zambezi River Flows Recorded at Victoria Falls Gauging Station

River flows recorded at the Victoria Falls Gauging Station also continued their gradual seasonal recession during the period under review, decreasing from 1,549 m^3/s on 30th June 2026 to 980 m^3/s on 21st July 2026, reflecting the normal post rainfall season recession in runoff contributions from the upper catchment.

Flows at Victoria Falls have remained marginally below the corresponding 2025 figures throughout the period under review, with 980 m^3/s recorded on 21st July 2026 compared to 1,029 m^3/s on the same date in 2025.

The comparative flow trend is highlighted below:

Date	2026	2025
30th June 2026	1,549 m^3/s	1,780 m^3/s
7th July 2026	1,346 m^3/s	1,506 m^3/s
14th July 2026	1,160 m^3/s	1,258 m^3/s
21st July 2026	980 m^3/s	1,029 m^3/s

m^3/s – cubic metres per second

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead, river flows across the Kariba Catchment are expected to continue their normal seasonal recession through the remainder of the dry season. Short term forecasts to 25th July

2026 point to the lake level receding further to around 482.02 metres above sea level, equivalent to approximately 30.51 Billion Cubic Metres (BCM) of live storage, or 47.08 percent of full usable capacity. This is still higher than that recorded during the year 2025.

The 2025/2026 rainfall season recorded normal performance across the Kariba Upper Catchment and normal to above normal performance across the Lower Catchment, resulting in generally above average inflows into Lake Kariba capable of sustaining the revised 2026 combined water allocation of 36 Billion Cubic Metres of water for power generation operations at Kariba dam (18 BCM of water for each of the two power generation utilities).

The Authority will continue to closely monitor hydrological and climatic conditions across the basin and provide timely updates to stakeholders as additional information becomes available.

About the Zambezi River Authority

The Zambezi River Authority is a bilateral organisation that is jointly and equally owned by the Governments of Zambia and Zimbabwe (the Contracting States). The Authority's primary function is to operate, maintain, monitor and regulate the water level in the Kariba Reservoir. It is also mandated to construct, operate and maintain any other dam infrastructure on the Zambezi River and to collect, accumulate and process hydrological and environmental data regarding the Zambezi River for improved performance of its functions and for any other benefit to the socio-economic development of the Contracting States.

.....

ENG. CHRISTOPHER CHISENSE
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Ends// -

Issued by:
Selusiwe Y. Moyo
Manager – Communications and Stakeholder Relations
Lusaka, Zambia | Cell: +(260) 779 663 323 | Email: pr@zambezira.org
www.zambezira.org