**PRESS STATEMENT**
**(For Immediate Release)**

## UPDATE ON WATER LEVELS AT THE KARIBA DAM

**Lusaka, 17th July 2020** – The Zambezi River Authority (ZRA) hereby wishes to provide an update to the public regards the water levels at Kariba Dam. The update is a follow up to that provided in June 2020.

With the 2019/20 rainy season having effectively ended in April 2020, the Kariba catchment is no longer experiencing any rainfall activities. As per historical trends following the end of a rainfall season, flows of the Zambezi River and its tributaries are now receding and this downward trend is expected to continue until the commencement of the next rainfall season.

The Authority has continued to gather and record daily water level readings at its 14 gauging stations which are located within the Kariba Catchment area. Of these, two key gauging stations namely, Chavuma and Victoria Falls are pivotal regards the gauging of the overall inflows into Lake Kariba. The recorded flows at the two stations, including the lake itself are as follows:

***Zambezi River Flows as Monitored at Chavuma Gauging Station***

The Zambezi River flows recorded at Chavuma rose from 236 cubic meters per second ($m^3/s$) recorded on 1st January 2020 to double peak flows of 5,006 cubic meters per second ($m^3/s$) and 5,825 $m^3/s$ recorded on 25th February 2020 and 17th March 2020, respectively, before receding. The flows recorded this week at Chavuma have been of the order 330 cubic meters per second and receding as per historical trends. The flows recorded last year during the same period were lower and in the order of 120($m^3/s$) and also receding.

***Zambezi River Flows as Monitored at Victoria Falls Gauging Station***

The Zambezi River flows recorded at Victoria Falls rose from 349 $m^3/s$ recorded at the start of January 2020 to double peaks of 4,289 $m^3/s$ and 4,568 $m^3/s$ recorded on 31st March 2020 and 3rd May 2020, respectively, before starting to recede.

As of 16th July 2020, the flows at Victoria Falls had receded to 1,099 $m^3/s$ which is 88% higher than the flow recorded same date last year of 585 $m^3/s$.

***Lake Levels Recorded at Kariba***

The lake level receded for the most part of the first quarter of 2020 due to the delayed onset of the 2019/2020 rainfall season, which only effectively commenced in January 2020 instead of commencing in October 2019 as earlier forecasted by Meteorological Authorities. Following the commencement of the rains, the lake water levels began to increase starting on 12th January 2020, with the lake level steadily rising from 476.71m which was barely 1.21 meters (m) above the Minimum Operating Level (MOL), to reach a peak of 481.30m recorded on 30th June 2020, with a corresponding usable storage of 26.94 Billion Cubic Meters (BCM) or 41.57% live storage. Thereafter, the lake level started receding. As of 16th July 2020, the lake level had receded to 481.21m, representing 40.89% live storage or 26.50 BCM of stored usable water. This left the lake level at 5.71m above the Minimum Operating Level (MOL) of 475.50m.

***Water Allocation for Power Generation at Kariba***

Following a review of hydrological outlook at Kariba undertaken at the end of the second quarter of 2020, the Authority has since **increased** the water allocation for power generation operations at Kariba by **Four Billion Cubic Meters (4BCM).** As per agreed operational framework for Kariba, the additional water allocation will be shared equally between ZESCO Limited and Zimbabwe Power Company (ZPC) for their respective power generation operations at Kariba. This is an upward revision of the combined water allocation for the year 2020 from 23BCM to 27 BCM.

The Authority will continue to monitor the hydrological outlook for the Kariba Catchment and water levels at Kariba Dam and keep the public informed accordingly.

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