

# TERRAVIVA



## SADC Multi-stakeholder Water Dialogue

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**Publisher:** Mario Lubetkin

**Managing Editor:** Paula Fray

**Editor:** Tinus De Jager

**Reporters:** Charles Mushizi, Tsimisi Matope, Ackel Zwane, Lwanga Mwilu, Mantoe Phakathi, Marianne Pretorius, Marie-Anne Lepathy, Tinus De Jager, Zukiswa Zimela, Charles Mangwiro, Alma Balopi, Ntando Ncube, Erick Kabendera.

**Design and Layout**  
Abdullah Vawda

**Administration**  
Tafadzwa Rafemoyo

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# DEVELOPPEMENT Nécessité d'une autorité conjointe de gestion de l'eau dans le Bassin du Congo

Charles-M. Mushizi

**M**BABANE - «Les effets dus au changement climatique constituent un nouveau défi qui affecte le développement des pays d'Afrique et freine la réalisation des Objectifs du millénaire pour le développement (OMD)», selon des rapports sur l'eau publiés en Afrique australe.

Ces rapports ont été distribués au 5ème Dialogue sur l'eau organisé à Mbabane, la capitale du Swaziland, par la Communauté de développement d'Afrique australe (SADC), du 28 au 29 juin.

Selon le Centre pour la recherche internationale en foresterie, «un aspect notable est que les moyens d'existence de la population, en particulier les femmes, dépendent des secteurs sensibles comme l'agriculture, la pêche, l'élevage, les forêts, l'eau... qui contribuent à plus ou moins 75 pour cent du PIB (produit intérieur brut) des pays du Bassin du Congo, par exemple». Et ces secteurs sont «déjà aussi affectés» par le changement climatique.

Pour les pays membres du Bassin du Congo, «il est nécessaire de relancer l'idée d'un projet de gestion intergouvernementale des ressources en eaux transfrontalières et des forêts pour faire face à ces nouveaux défis», affirme la délégation de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC) à la rencontre.

L'un des objectifs du dialogue étant de «pousser les parties prenantes et en particulier les gestionnaires des ressources en eaux à engager des échanges sur les effets et impacts du changement climatique, il est nécessaire, pour le Bassin du Congo, de réfléchir sur les bénéfices mutuels à tirer d'immenses réserves dont dispose le bassin»,

indique Cyrille Masamba, membre de la délégation congolaise.

Chrispin Sedeke, chef de Division gestion des eaux transfrontalières au ministère de l'Environnement, et délégué de la RDC à Mbabane, a déclaré à IPS: «On pourrait penser à développer des stratégies d'adaptation et d'atténuation des effets de serre à travers cet espace sans compromettre l'intégrité de ces forêts pour assurer l'approvisionnement continu en biens et services de l'écosystème». «Il faut trouver des financements nécessaires et des compétences avérées dans le domaine: c'est l'autre défi», ajoute Sedeke.

La réflexion doit prioritairement prendre en compte la déforestation et la sécheresse, deux fléaux de plus en plus remarquables dans la région. A cause de ces deux menaces, on sait, par exemple, qu'il y a une baisse de la navigabilité annuelle de l'Oubangi, un important affluent du fleuve Congo en Afrique centrale. «De neuf à 10 navigations l'an, on est passé à trois ou quatre seulement en 2010», selon Masamba.

Masamba, qui est également membre du Comité national d'action de l'eau et assainissement, une structure interministérielle en RDC, affirme qu'il «faut, dans ce cas, penser à mettre en place une autorité intergouvernementale pour une gestion conjointe des eaux concernées et des problèmes qui en découlent».

Le rapport présenté par la Coopération allemande (GTZ), dont copie est parvenue à IPS, indique qu'une «importante initiative existe déjà dans ce sens à travers la Commission internationale du Bassin du Congo, Oubangi, Sangha,



A flood of obstacles ... Prof Mike Muller outlines the water challenges. Credit: IPS/Marianne Pretorius

By Mantoe Phakathi

The southern African region is underutilising its water – a resource to which its citizens already have limited access. Professor Mike Muller from the Global Water Partnership told experts in water, environment, climate change and civil society organisations from southern Africa that getting water to people is the biggest obstacle among SADC countries.

“It’s true that Southern African countries are water stressed,” said Muller. “It’s going to get worse with the increase in population and the impact of climate change.” This has resulted to increasing poverty and water insecurity in the region, said Muller, at the two-day SADC Water Dialogue.

He said while the perception is that countries with vast deserts, such as Botswana and Namibia, are the ones that do not have adequate amounts of water per person, the reality is that South Africa and Malawi are leading the pack in terms of lack of access to water. The trick is the amount of investment to water infrastructure to get it closer to the people, a strength all SADC countries lack.

Although Mozambique is leading the pack in water availability with 11 320 cubic metres per person

# Getting Water to the people

per year, the country is only using 0.3 percent of its resources. Out of its 1 110 cubic metres per person per year South Africa uses 31 percent of its resources and it is the top country in water utilising, although it is also not enough.

He said the region has failed to exploit its water resources to produce enough food through agriculture and hydro-energy.

“Industrial agriculture could transform the region,” he said. In fact, when there is adequate water use to promote agriculture, the region could also realise energy efficiency through bio-energy. He said companies in sugarcane business are also able to produce ethanol.

Professor Muller said the Lower Usuthu Downstream Development Project (Lusip) is a fine example of regional water integration and utilisation. Lusip results from a cooperation of three governments Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland, to utilise the Great Usuthu River for agricultural enterprises in the Kingdom.

While the Swazi government built the dam for the benefit of its poor rural communities around Siphofaneni, the Great Usuthu River is based in South Africa and the water is allowed to flow into the Kingdom. In return, Swaziland allows a flow into Mozambique.

He said water should be used not just for profits but to also improve livelihoods hence the participation of communities is very crucial.

“Communities were involved to participate meaningfully right from

the planning stages of Lusip,” said Gugulethu Hlophe, acting chief executive officer at the Swaziland Water and Agricultural Enterprises.

Swazi Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Princess Tsandzile, who opened the dialogue, said Lusip and the Komati Basin Downstream Development from the Komati River are transforming livelihoods.

Although building dams is an expensive initiative, governments have seen the need to invest in water infrastructure, said Bogadi Mathangwane, deputy director of Water Affairs in Botswana.

“The challenge with getting water to the people is that you find that some villages are very far from the infrastructure and getting the water to the people tends to be very expensive,” said Mathangwane.

The dialogue is key to the issue of infrastructure development because the 15 SADC countries are finding ways of tapping into the climate finance, given that their governments do not have adequate budgets to invest in water infrastructure.

“Although there is funding available for climate change, accessing them is very difficult because the water sector is fragmented among different departments in our countries,” said Mathangwane.

Professor Muller advised that the water sector in the region should get its house in order before other departments could come into the party.

# SWAZILAND

## 66 familles réunies autour de l'eau grâce à un projet intergouvernemental

Charles-M. Mushizi

**M**ANZINI - «Komati Basin Water Authority» (KOBWA), un projet intergouvernemental, mis en place en 1993 par l'Afrique du Sud et le Swaziland, a aidé 66 familles swazies à se regrouper autour des activités agricoles afin de lutter contre l'insécurité alimentaire et la pauvreté.

Le projet a été conçu pour une gestion commune de la rivière Komati, dans la région de Hhohhoa, dans le nord du Swaziland, en Afrique australe.

Sipho Nkambule, directeur exécutif du projet a déclaré à IPS: «KOBWA a mis en place une importante réserve d'eau, 332 millions de mètres cubes d'eau, qu'il distribue à travers les communautés locales selon des modalités bien précises afin d'assurer une gestion durable et efficace de cette ressource rare dans cette partie de l'Afrique grâce à l'engagement des gouvernements de deux pays».

Selon Nkambule, «la meilleure manière d'opérer cette gestion était d'envisager le regroupement des communautés ou des familles autour des projets agricoles communs. Ceci permet déjà de mettre en place des activités de grande envergure et est plus bénéfique pour un plus grand nombre à la fois».

«Nous avons été réunis venant de différents villages situés à environ 50 kilomètres pour nous installer dans le village de Nyonyane grâce au projet, afin d'entreprendre la production, sur 200 hectares, de la canne à sucre et des légumes pour bénéficier d'un point commun d'irrigation mis en place par KOBWA», a affirmé à IPS, Luke Kunene, chef de la communauté Nyonyane.

«L'espace cultivé par l'ensemble des familles membres de la communauté, représente la somme des espaces que nous avons individuellement dans nos villages avant de nous réunir à Nyonyane. Et lors de la production, après déduction des charges d'exploitation et de la contribution au fonctionnement du projet, le bénéfice est distribué au prorata des mises parcelaires», explique Kunene.

Selon ce chef de village, chacun des membres de la communauté avait auparavant ses activités privées. Mais, elles n'étaient pas viables parce que petites tailles, elles consistaient à faire une agriculture vivrière sur de petits espaces. «Maintenant, nous avons un projet plus vaste qui nous réunit et qui produit un revenu de 4,5 millions à cinq millions de rands chaque année».

«Faute d'eau, durant l'ensemble de l'année, la terre est de plus en plus sèche. Ceci est à la base d'une insécurité alimentaire puisque la productivité agricole a sensiblement baissé aussi entre-temps. Le projet a su relancer l'agriculture dans cette partie du pays et redonné des ressources aux familles qui y vivent dont la mienne», indique Henson Lukhele, un conducteur de bus habitant la place.

Lukhele qui trouve «salutaire le projet» affirme que «la gestion efficiente de l'eau est un énorme défi dans cette partie du pays où tout est devenu sec».

Gestionnaire de l'environnement, Sibongaye Mkhathshwa estime que dans un contexte de changement climatique, les difficultés majeures sont de deux ordres: «l'accès à l'eau ainsi que la lutte

contre l'insécurité alimentaire et la faim. Ce projet prend en compte ces défis actuels et apporte des réponses vécues au quotidien par les habitants de Nyonyane».

Mkhathshwa a déclaré à IPS: «L'eau est véritablement une ressource rare au Swaziland.

Voilà qui justifie que même toutes les eaux usées sont recyclées, purifiées et redistribuées dans le circuit ordinaire. Lorsqu'on visite la partie nord du pays, on se rend compte que la sécheresse est une attaque contre l'agriculture».

Il a ajouté que KOBWA a construit un canal de 24 km qui dessert la communauté agricole de Nyonyane.

«Le projet a même permis la construction de deux écoles primaires et d'un institut supérieur au bénéfice des habitants. Mais l'autre défi demeure celui de l'accès, pour l'ensemble du village, à l'eau potable.

Nous avons certes de l'eau pour irriguer l'espace cultivé, mais l'eau potable reste une denrée rare», souligne Philippe Maduna, membre de la communauté Nyonyane.

L'Afrique du Sud et le Swaziland contribuent respectivement pour 60 pour cent et 40 pour cent à l'implantation et au fonctionnement quotidien du projet évalué à environ 1,646 milliard de rands.

Il bénéficie à quelque 2.000 Swazis et 6.000 Sud-Africains depuis 2002, en termes d'emplois, d'élèves et étudiants qui fréquentent les écoles construites par le projet, et en termes d'habitants regroupés en communautés.

# Mapping Indigenous Knowledge



Ken Msibi, SADC water policy and strategy expert. Credit: IPS/ Zukiswa Zimela

By Lwanga Mwilu

Indigenous knowledge is crucial to climate change resilience strategies for the water sector in southern Africa, Ken Msibi, a water policy and strategy expert at the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat has said.

Speaking during a report-back session on Climate Change Adaptation Strategy at the 5th SADC Multi-Stakeholder Water Dialogue on June 28, Msibi said it was important for SADC member states to tap into existing knowledge when coming up with climate change adaptation strategies.

“Let us not come up with entirely new knowledge in our efforts to draw up resilience strategies but rather recognise and implement the knowledge of our forefathers.

We should make it a point to consult our elders and find out what they know and how it has worked for them,” he said.

Msibi said local communities from different African countries had been predicting weather patterns with reasonable accuracy for years: “We can predict some of these changes affecting us today by bringing indigenous knowledge on board, correlating it with modern technologies and drawing on that in our strategy formulation.”

He said it was neither necessary nor helpful to reinvent strategies.

“We are trying to have studies in all member states to map up the existing knowledge and see if there is any similarity in knowledge held in the different countries.

We will try to establish whether all countries speak the same language with regard to their indigenous knowledge before we even subject it to research correctness and scientific validation.”

Senior Programme Manager for SADC Water Division Phera Ramoeli, presenting an overview of the Water Dialogues, during the past four years, noted that there had been a number of successes: “We have influenced the way planning is being conducted and the way policies are being formulated in SADC.

“Most of these are now very conscious of climate change and even take into account deliberations from past Water Dialogues - so we can claim some success as far as that goes,” he said.

# Building a Community to Build a Dam

By Lwanga Mwilu and  
Marie-Anne Lepathy

When farmer Phillip Maduna visits the Maguga Dam, he does not see the walls, the spillway or the vast body of water. Instead, he sees the land of his ancestors, the graves where they now lie, the places of his childhood and home where he grew up.

“As old people we miss the old place, our old home. When we go there we do not see the dam; we see the place where we grew up. You cannot give an old person a new home and expect them to forget the home where they grew up in. That dam was our home and that is what we see when we go there,” the father-of-seven says.

Maduna’s family is one of 125 homesteads displaced to make way for the Maguga Dam in the Hhohho region of Swaziland. The construction project affected the homesteads by either inundating the houses, farming or grazing land. When the dam was built, 66 families agreed to be resettled in Nyonyane – the place Maduna’s

children will now call home.

The Maguga Dam project is overseen by the Komati Basin Water Authority (KOBWA), a bi-national shared watercourse institution between Swaziland and South Africa. KOBWA’s resettlement and compensation was motivated by the objective to leave the people better off than they were before displacement.

KOBWA CEO Sipho Nkambule stresses the importance of the dam to the irrigation purposes of the community. He pointed out that the dam was serving more people than the river had before. “There is now increased irrigation by about 16 000 hectares and more people are benefiting,” he said.

But the road the dam has been long: “The community had representation in compensation and resettlement negotiations. They told us what they wanted and we released funds and any surplus money was returned to them.”

The resettlement compensation package saw the displaced peo-

ple owning and living in newly built brick houses with electricity and water for the first time; a new bridge, a new road, a clinic, two primary schools and a high school within the community.

The package also included, among other things, capacity building that saw the resettled members move from subsistence to commercial sugar cane farming.

Petros Thusi, one of the resettled farmers, is a contented grandfather who lives with some of his grandchildren in a brick house built under the project.

Petros, his two wives and five adult children, are content with the choice they made to be resettled in the Kwinjelweni Hills, quite far from the Maguga Dam where he was born. “I have two wives, five children and many grandchildren and I am happy,” said the sexagenarian.

Choosing to be part of the resettled community, Thusi like the other members of this farming community, has access to land which



Maguga Dam, Swaziland. Credit: IPS / Zukiswa Zimela

forms part of the 200 hectares of farmland where the community cultivates sugar cane on commercial scale.

Community chair Luke Kunene recounted the transition from subsistence to commercial sugar cane farming. "Initially we had transport problems because we had to hire haulage trucks to get our produce to the market and that was very expensive. Over time, we used our profits and savings to buy our own truck. We are proud of this because we did not get any loan from the bank to do this," he said. "In a successful year, we are able to make on average R4.5 million per year. After paying our costs, we then distribute the profit among the member households."

But it has not all be positive and the group admits that there are still some who are unhappy. Maduna likens it to that of the biblical story of the Israelites returning home from Egypt: "While they were still in the wilderness, they sometimes thought they were better off in Egypt and wished they could go back. We also have such moments when people get frustrated because something has not gone right and they miss the old place and imagine that they would have been in a better situation there. The truth is we are in a much better situation now but even that does not stop us from missing our old places."



Farmer Phillip Maduna and his family were relocated from Maguga Dam to Nyonyane. Credit: IPS/ Zukiswa Zimela

## Water, water everywhere



By Ackel Zwane

Since the resettlement of 125 families to make way to the Maguga Dam project, the community of Nyonyane resettlement village have enjoyed multiple benefits of continued access to water.

As a result, the community has embarked on a number of projects that are dependent on the available water and these include irrigated sugarcane farming, smallscale maize and vegetable farming.

The Maguga Dam project is a product of the Komati Basin Water Authority (KOBWA), which was established under a treaty on the Development and Utilisation of the Water Resources of the Komati River Basin, signed in 1992 between South Africa and Swaziland.

Chairman of the Ekuvinjelweni Farmers' Association, Luke Kunene, says water has never been a problem since they relocated to the new village as the project provided water via a water canal that made it possible to irrigate their 200 hectares of sugarcane.

"At times the weather is unreliable and the rains come when we least expect them, thus affecting our yield. We are not worried much when others complain about drought because we have always had water," he says.

KOBWA's Sibonangaye Mkhathshwa says the project made commitments to provide unlimited access to water as was the case before the community was moved from the host area.

"We first constructed a 23 kilometre

canal that would provide water for the community for agricultural and other purposes. We also provided them with tap water that is available without interruptions," said Mkhathshwa.

Reverend Jameson Mncina, the chairman of the Ekuvinjelweni Resettlement Committee, is equally happy about the availability of reliable water flow for both domestic and agricultural purposes.

He says most of the villagers who were not involved in agricultural activities were now active commercial farmers under the sugarcane company that the committee helped set up.

The sugarcane company was formed by 66 families who put together their share of the farming land in order to make a total of 200 hectares in which they plant the sugarcane. Each season they used to produce 103 tonnes per hectare, but now it has diminished to 90 tonnes.

Chairman Kunene blames lack of expertise, but technical support from the Swaziland Sugar Association has set them on the right track again. They are now able to address challenges such as fertiliser mix, soil testing and use of appropriate seed varieties.

"We have been able to learn whether we provide the crop sufficient water and as a result have now provided enough sprinklers and longer time for watering the plants," says Phillip Maduna, a member of the farmers company.

# Dry Namibia finds water in unusual places



Water financing ... Anna Matros-Gorases of the Southern African Science Service Centre, during the 5th SADC Water Dialog held in Swaziland. Credit: Marianne Pretorius / IPS

By Marianne Pretorius

**B**y 2030, Namibia will have to provide three times as much water for irrigation as it is currently doing, says Anna Matros-Gorases of the Southern African Science Service Centre.

And, to do so, it has begun to use some unconventional mechanisms.

Speaking at the 5th SADC Multi-Stakeholder Water Dialogue in Swaziland, Matros-Gorases told delegates these mechanisms included the reclamation of waste water to potable standards, the re-use of purified sewage effluent in water parks and on golf courses and the artificial enhancement of aquifers. The latter, she said, had been ongoing since 2004.

According to Matros-Gorases, the second part of the four-phase project was finished in 2008. However, a lack of funding has it has stopped further progress.

Matros-Gorases said Namibia will need as much as US \$2 billion to meet the plans envisaged for its Vision 2030 as part of its drive to qualify as an industrial country.

But, she said, the unusual and unforeseen floods that occurred earlier this year - reportedly leaving 67 people dead - was forcing the government to spend millions to repair damaged infrastructure and social displacements.

Apart from these unplanned costs, a lack of understanding of

investment requirements appeared to be the "core problem" for financing of water projects.

"The Namibian people tend to have a mindset that the government is responsible for everything," said Matros-Gorases.

Other challenges included poor asset management and investments which are not maintained. "In a country such as Namibia, water should be a top priority and currently it is shockingly low on the list".

"Climate change will require major adaptation and efficiency improvements. We have seen that unconventional sources are cheaper and save more water," she added.

# Protecting Zambia's ecosystems through partnership

By Lwanga Mwilu

The Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE) of the western province of Zambia has partnered with the Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) to ensure sustainable management of the area's forests, wetlands and grasslands from which the local Lozi people derive ecosystem services.

In a presentation delivered on his behalf by PPF Head of Climate Change Programme Michiel Smit, Senior Chief Inyambo Yeta of Sesheke District in western province acknowledged the connection between ineffective environmental management and climate change.

"There is a strong correlation between sustainable natural resources management, mitigation of, and adaptation to climate change. Given the linkages between ecosystems in western province, the sustainable management of

forests will have positive spin offs for wetlands whose recharge and sustainability relies on watershed forest management and maintenance."

Senior Chief Yeta said the BRE was concerned at the exploitation of the area's natural resources by foreigners often aided by the locals.

"In the end the Lozi people pay for this in perpetuated poverty. It is therefore essential that these resources and associated ecosystems be protected."

PPF is developing a Sustainable Forest Management Programme (SFMP) to help the Lozi people derive maximum socio-economic and ecological benefits.

"An important component of SFM is Reducing Emissions from

Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+)."

Zambia is one of nine countries, and one of three in Africa alongside Tanzania and DRC, of the United Nations Collaborative Programme that pilots REDD+.

"The immediate steps to follow in the SFMP are to conduct community participatory meetings in each district of the western province and to do an aerial verification of the already identified forest blocks. This will be followed by an assessment of current timber and pitsaw licenses and the development of forest management options and models. These are envisioned to be completed by end of November 2011."



# COLUMN Tackling Climate Change through Water

By Remmy Makumbe

Director Infrastructure and Services,  
SADC Secretariat



Credit: IPS

Climate change and water have a unique relationship. Some of the key adversities as a result of climate change are either floods or droughts, both of which require great effort in terms of mitigation, based on recognised and costly adaptation mechanisms.

The SADC discourse on Climate Change had its genesis at the Integrated Water Resources Water Resources Management (IWRM) forum in Maseru, Lesotho, in 2008.

The outcomes from this meeting have since informed the due SADC Climate Change process to date, all the way to COP 15 and COP 16, as we pursue the road to COP 17 in Durban, South Africa.

There is broad consensus as regards the centrality of water to the region's economic growth and our overarching objective of poverty eradication, an intervention espoused by the UN effort towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

In relation to water, the Millennium Declaration of 2005 has targeted halving the population with access to water by 2015.

And, the key question is: how far are we from meeting this noble target?

According to the World Bank, our continent has the least water storage per capita in the world.

In Sub Saharan Africa we only store about 4% of our renewable flows compared to 70-90% in the developed world.

The 2010 MDGs review during the

last UN General Assembly suggested that Sub-Saharan Africa is way off target, for which reason we need to redouble our efforts if meaningful progress is to be realised.

Similarly, the SADC RISDP and other attendant documents have set out targets for the water sector that include:

- Develop by 2015 water infrastructure needed to double land under irrigation, and
- Halve the proportion of people without access to drinking water and proper sanitation.

Clearly, these targets cannot be realised if adequate resources are not availed to develop the much needed infrastructure in this sector, which is why this year's theme addresses itself to the pivotal issue of water infrastructure financing – more specifically through the available opportunities provided under climate financing.

In 2010, our focus was also on climate change, albeit zeroing in on Climate Resilience through Benefit Sharing.

This time around, we are here brainstorming on climate finance, especially in financing strategic water initiatives in order to build resilience to climate change.

This is aimed at taking full advantage of the upcoming Green Fund, whose modalities are still being discussed.

As a region we need to be proactive, strategise and prepare projects that can tap into this fund

in order to accord us the opportunity to implement mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change and variability.

The outcomes of the Sixth IPCC Technical Paper on Climate Change and Water is indeed pertinent as it articulates to what extent climate change adversely affects fresh water systems, coupled with the impact of other stresses, such as population growth, changing economic activity, land-use and urbanisation.

Already, some of our Member States, namely Angola, Namibia, South Africa, Malawi, Lesotho, Botswana and Zambia have already borne the brunt of adversities through climate change.

One can cite other examples on the Zambezi Basin, which include:

- The River is expected to have a net deficit in river flows due to the higher surface temperatures and therefore an increase in the rate of evaporation, which has been projected to increase by 10- 25% by 2050;
- Rainfall changes are predicted over the whole of the Zambezi River Basin, with the general consensus of results showing a range of 0.3 – 0.6 degrees Celsius per decade.
- It is projected that runoff will significantly decrease in the Zambezi River Basin with the projected range being between 26% and 40%.

The impact on other rivers can only be similar.

The writing is on the wall that we need to migrate from rhetoric to action in order to meaningfully address the challenge at hand.

What the region needs is an Action Plan, with clearly signposted interventions and deliverables and a strong Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism which can provide us with corrective action, time and again.

The SADC blueprint for development, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), is currently undergoing its first review since commencement of implementation in April 2005.

I believe this ongoing dialogue could not have come at a more opportune moment, as the outcomes of this forum will no doubt inform the next steps, interventions and priorities of the RISDP.

The issue of addressing access to water for our citizens can no longer be the exclusive responsibility of government alone. It is pleasing to note that many humanitarian agencies are not complementing government efforts.

SADC's economies depend on the activities of climate sensitive sectors like agriculture, fisheries, tourism as well as hydropower dependent industries, all of which are at the mercy of climate change and variability.

It is for this reason that SADC is current developing a Climate Change Strategy.

To this end, a water chapter is being submitted for approval to the Water Resources Technical Committee. This strategy will inform not only our collective arguments at international fora, but indeed our course of action to tackle the impact of climate change head-on.

*\* This is an edited version of the presentation to the opening session of the 2011 SADC Multi-Stakeholder Water Dialogue in Swaziland on June 28, 2011.*

## Q&A: Preparing for floods

**M**ANZINI - While southern Africa battles to adapt to climate change, thousands of families have been devastated by floods in the last summer rainfall season. Not only was millions of dollars worth of property and infrastructure destroyed, but many states are struggling for funding to control outbreaks of livestock diseases, deal with inaccessibility to health facilities, restore ravaged tourism sectors and, at the top of the list, food insecurity.

**Tsitsi Matope speaks to the SADC Director of Infrastructure and Services, Remmy Makumbe, about the critical steps the region need to take to reduce the impact of events such as the recent floods.**

**TM:** The last summer season floods that hit the Southern Africa region presented the need for effective disaster preparedness. Do we lack capacity to tackle and manage the situation?

**RM:** We need concerted efforts to strengthen disaster management and adaptation mechanisms to ensure we have no repeat of the Mozambican flood disaster. It is key to reduce vulnerability and impact on downstream communities. We need political commitment in various countries and better understanding on the impacts of climate change on the communities and economies for action.

**TM:** It seems there is no effective way to deal with flooding; what really works apart from

strengthening warning systems?

**RM:** We need proper enhancement of regulating our water-courses, particularly those that cut across various countries. Together with effective communication systems, this can save lives. Most of our water in the SADC region ends up in Mozambique and that makes the country a major victim of flooding. A combination of strategies can work and these include, coordinated efforts by various river based organisations such as the Zambezi Authority and others.

**TM:** This did not work in the case of Mozambique floods almost a decade ago?

**RM:** Like I said, we need a combination of strategies – it is critical that we develop infrastructure to store water downstream in case of flooding downstream areas like Mozambique.

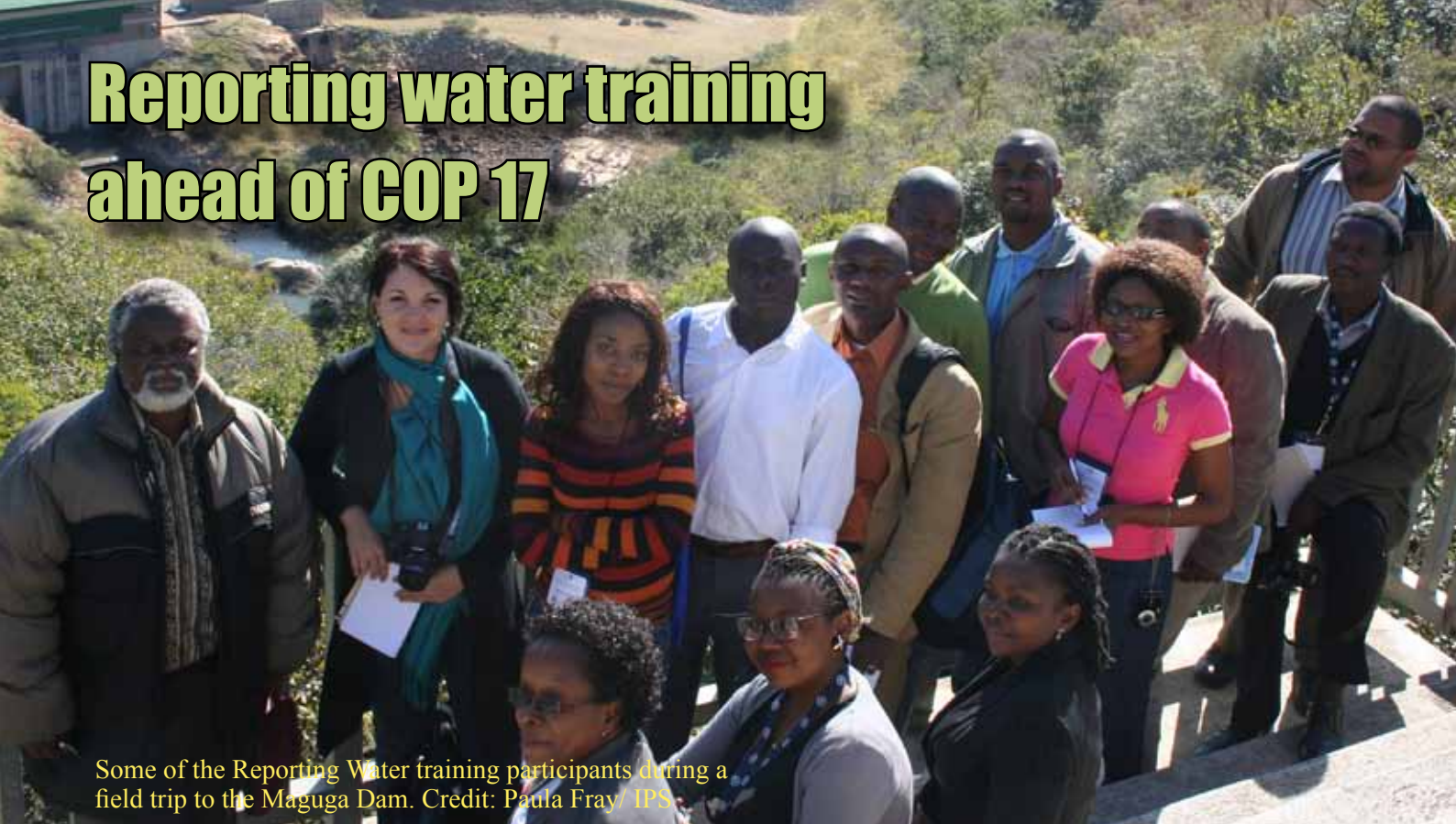
**TM:** The situation looks gloomy in the Southern Africa region due to the effects of floods. What opportunities are there amid this food crisis?

**RM:** (These include) Water harvesting and transfer of water to drought-stricken areas in order to utilise the water and ensure maximum food production.

This is also an opportunity for countries to renew their energies to improve on weaker areas of mitigation such as enhancing communication and coordination of disaster management programmes based on lessons learnt.



# Reporting water training ahead of COP 17



Some of the Reporting Water training participants during a field trip to the Maguga Dam. Credit: Paula Fray IPS

**M**ANZINI, SWAZILAND – Reporters from various SADC countries have participated in “Reporting Water” training ahead of the Water Dialogue in this mountain kingdom in southern Africa.

The 5th SADC Multi-Stakeholder Water Dialogue, being held under the theme of “Watering Development in SADC: Financing Water for Climate Resilience to Ensure Regional Security” from June 28 - 29, has brought together key stakeholders to discuss critical water issues in the region.

SADC Water Division Senior Programme Manager Phera Ramoeli said it was important the information from the Dialogue was communicated to the wider citizenry in the region. “Building the capacity of our communication and media experts to report on water is critical ahead of COP 17 where SADC will highlight its various activities,” said Ramoeli.

The SADC-commissioned Southern Africa Water Wire ([www.africa-water.org](http://www.africa-water.org)) will also support reporters with fellowships to cover the event. The reporters are learning about water issues in the region with a specific focus on reporting climate change ahead of COP 17. The IPS Africa programme focused on skills as well as knowledge training. Apart from practical

writing and multimedia skills training, reporters met SADC officials and water experts and were taken on a field trip to the Maguga Dam where they met with officials of the Komati Basin Water Authority (KOBWA) as well as residents affected by the organisation.

KOBWA CEO Siphon Nkambule outlined the legislative framework in which river basin organisations were established and the work the organisation did with the community during the building of the dam.

“Water is a critical ingredient in SADC’s development. The potential costs of climate change in the region can therefore not be underestimated,” said IPS Regional Director for Africa, Paula Fray.

“IPS Africa is committed to ensuring that there is a well trained cadre of reporters able to cover the COP17 and ensure that Africa’s voices are highlighted and heard,” she added.

IPS Africa, with the support of SADC and its supporting donors, will grant several fellowships to reporters from across the region to cover the COP17 meetings.

One such partner is the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Dr Horst Vogel, head of the Trans-

boundary Water Management Programme in SADC said capacity development was at the heart of development cooperation as implemented by GIZ.

“It is in line with this approach and belief that we support the Southern Africa Water Wire and the associated training of journalists from the SADC member states,” said Vogel.

The 12 reporters come from Botswana, the DRC, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Southern Africa Water Wire is a leading provider of water news for the SADC region which produces a consistent flow of print and radio stories to media and water NGO groups in the region.

The Southern African Water Wire is commissioned by the secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) with financial support from German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in delegated cooperation with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). GIZ is implementing the partnership programme.