

16th OKACOM Meeting
Press Release

26th May 2010

OKACOM commits to share information about water to reduce impacts of floods and droughts on people living along the Okavango River

The Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission met on the 26th of May 2010 to discuss issues pertaining to better management of the Okavango River Basin. This meeting was preceded by meetings of the OKACOM taskforces and the Okavango Basin Steering Committee. Among the issues discussed at this meeting, a major breakthrough was the agreement on a protocol to share river information that will help the three countries and communities better prepare themselves to cope with extreme climatic events such as floods and droughts.

Considering that the Okavango River starts in Angola and passes through Namibia and ends in Botswana, heavy rains in one country can be a harbinger of floods to come in another. Therefore, early warning of rising river levels will allow downstream countries to prepare and avoid the worst impacts such as the loss of life, livestock and negative impacts on local agriculture and tourism.

Furthermore, the Commission deliberated on the outcomes of the Okavango River Basin Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis, a key document to be released by OKACOM to inform the preparation of a Strategic Action Program for the basin.

The Commission also chose to honour its retired Commissioners, acknowledging their contribution to development of OKACOM and the long term commitment of the riparian countries to wise management of the basin.

At this meeting OKACOM acknowledged the considerable contributions of its development partners over the years, contributions of close to 20 million US dollars. The Swedish and US governments, the United Nations Development Program, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation and the Global Environment Facility agreed to continue their longstanding partnership, complementing the efforts of the three basin state governments to enhance management of the basin and the lives of people who live in the three countries.

For OKACOM ANGOLA

For OKACOM BOTSWANA

For OKACOM NAMIBIA

Mr. Armindo M. Gomes da Silva

Mr. Gabaake Gabaake

Mr. Andrew Ndishishi