

## **WATER, SANITATION AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**

### **Introduction**

In response to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPI) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Government of Zimbabwe has streamlined integrated water management, health, water and sanitation and poverty reduction among other issues, and has developed strategies and initiatives to ensure that these are addressed in sectoral planning. The strategies and initiatives include in themselves measures to reduce poverty levels through sustainable resource utilisation.

The quality and quantity of water impacts heavily either positively or negatively on ecosystems and human health, agricultural production, biodiversity, energy, development and natural environment. Sound water resources management is therefore central to the achievement of sustainable development. Management measures are urgently needed to ensure sustainability. As a result financial resources in partnership with the private sector and Non Governmental organisations (NGOs) have been put in place to ensure sustainable use of water resources.

## **1. DESCRIPTION OF AN INITIATIVE**

### **1.1 Catchment Councils**

The country has developed 7 Catchment Councils namely Mazoe, Manyame, Sanyati, Save, Gwayi, Mzingwane and Runde that fall under 7 Catchment Areas namely Mazoe, Manyame, Sanyati, Save, Gwayi, Mzingwane and Runde Catchment Areas. Each Catchment Council is responsible for managing the water resource in its catchment area, including streams and dams. The other objective was to ensure sustainable use of water resources for various needs and purposes like agricultural activities, fishing, sanitation and equitable distribution of water in terms of sharing water and when constructing small dams upstream. The Department of Natural Resources in the Ministry of Environment is also involved in the protection and sustainable use of wetlands in Zimbabwe. Partners in this initiative are Ministry of Water and Infrastructural Development, Zimbabwe Water Authority (ZINWA), WWF, IUCN, Mukuvisi Woodlands, Birdlife Zimbabwe and Environment Africa.

### **1.2 Management of Gazetted Forest**

The Forestry Commission manages +/- 800 000ha of gazetted forests in Kalahari sand forests of Matebeleland North and Midlands Provinces. As a national strategic resource, indigenous forests should be managed to conserve biodiversity, manage watershed, and protect fragile Kalahari sands and their ecosystem, sustaining the local hard wood timber industries for consumptive and non-consumptive tourism. Periodic forest resource inventories for timber and wildlife is carried out to take stock and monitor trends in levels of utilisation. Timber harvesting in demarcated forests is based on selection of individual trees of a prescribed minimum diameter for each of the main commercial species. Only trees of prescribed diameter and above are harvested if not marked for seed production.

The current annual cut of timber from the gazetted forests is 25 000m<sup>3</sup> from Lake Alice, Gwayi, Fuller and Inseze forests. Partners involved in the management and sustainable use are the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Forestry Commission, Forestry Company of Zimbabwe, Rural District Councils, indigenous hardwood associations and commercial timber operators.

### **1.3 Poverty Reduction**

The current trends indicate that poverty is on the increase in both rural and urban areas. The human poverty index was estimated at 36% of the total population in 2000. The government has come up with an initiative to fight poverty in its various forms using different means. Partners in implementing this initiative and its subsidiaries include Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture and Resettlement, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Parks and Wildlife management Authority, Forestry Commission, Communities, Ministry of Water and Infrastructural Development, ZINWA, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Agribank and tertiary institutions.

#### **1.3.1 Forest and Wildlife Land Based Policy**

The Communities' Resource Sharing is one of the principal means of alleviating poverty through sustainable utilisation of natural and wildlife resources. Community based natural resources management and wildlife based land reform policy are the key instruments to foster better land management on land that is agriculturally marginalised and prone to desertification if exposed to conventional agricultural practices. Out of a total of 55 districts, 33 districts have been granted "appropriate authority status" in Zimbabwe with the aim of sustainably utilising the wildlife resources in their area and generating revenue for communities living with the wildlife. In pursuant of this objective the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has issued a total of 433 hunting quotas to new landowners in each province as follows: Mat South – 183, Mat north – 64, Masvingo – 76, Mash west – 68, Mash east – 7, Mash central – 5, Manicaland – 6 and Midlands – 24.

#### **1.3.2 Land Redistribution Programme**

The current land reform programme aims at providing the majority of Zimbabweans with land to support agricultural production capacity. New farmers are encouraged to engage in alternative land-use practices like wildlife management and conservation, which is less deleterious to the environment and not drought prone, compared to conventional agriculture. The government has converted the Agricultural Finance Corporation into an Agribank with flexible financial financing for small-scale farmers. It has initiated the amalgamation of agricultural research and extension into AREX to ensure that research is farmer driven. Other support mechanisms for mainstreaming this initiative include farmer input support schemes and commodity producers' association e.g. Cotton Producers Association and Horticultural producers Association.

#### **1.3.3 Irrigation schemes**

One of the country's challenges is to reduce dependence on rain fed agriculture hence there is need and rationale to expand irrigation development to smallholder and communal farmers in the wake of intermittent droughts.

#### **1.4 Housing schemes**

The government set a target to achieve a significant improvement in the housing condition of at least 1,000,000 slum dwellers, peri-urban and high-density lodgers by 2020. Zimbabwe's target is to ensure that every household has access to a toilet within the homestead, and to potable water within 250m by 2015. The challenge of rapid urbanisation has forced the government to put on plan the construction of 162,500 housing units annually from 1985 to 2000. This saw construction of between 15,000 and 20,000 housing units which has further declined seeing only 5,500 stands being serviced in eight towns. Currently there a number of housing schemes being implemented namely the RBZ scheme for Zimbabweans living in the Diaspora, the Ministry of Local Government and Public Construction "pay for your house scheme", cooperatives' scheme and the conventional building societies' schemes. Partners involved in the implementation are the Ministry of Local Government and Public Construction, Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, RBZ, municipalities, building societies and home seekers.

#### **2. MAINSTREAMING AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Local governments and communities play a central role in the management of the environment and natural resources, water inclusive. It is in this regard that for sustainability to be achieved there is need for full participation of local communities in the planning and management of their environment and natural resources. The Government has developed and is implementing the District Environmental Action Planning (DEAP) Programme aimed to develop community capacity for environmental action planning. DEAP is a participatory planning process based on the concept of sustainable development, to promote community empowerment and ensure that the highlighted initiatives are owned by communities and are implemented. DEAP process is also a strategy for community mobilisation, capacity building, local community participation, and for mainstreaming environmental issues into development planning. Programmes like Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) is a good example.

#### **3. REPLICATING THE INITIATIVE**

Most of the initiatives can be replicated as long as supporting structures and resources are available. Catchment councils for instances are formed on the basis of existing catchment areas within a country. Poverty alleviation initiatives are a priority in most developing countries hence the challenge is to learn on each other's experience to avoid making similar mistakes or reinventing the wheel. Lessons learnt from our experience are more to do with constraints encountered during the implementation phase. These include lack of resources and capacity, incidence of natural disasters like droughts and floods.