

MEDIA STATEMENT

ZAMBIA, SWEDISH RESEARCH INSTITUTE AGREE ON FUNDING, WATER PROJECT COLLABORATION

STOCKHOLM – FRIDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2019 – ZAMBIA and Sweden's IVL Environmental Research Institute have agreed to work together to develop a series of water and environmental related projects which will be funded and implemented through the Water Resources Management Authority (WARMA).

And world-renowned water management body, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), has pledged to collaborate with Zambia so that it can contribute to the country's efforts in dealing with water challenges.

SIWI has also indicated that it would explore possibilities of collaborating with Zambia and the Global Water Partnership (GWP) to access funding for implementation of programmes in capacity building and other water resource management areas.

This came to light last week during two separate meetings between then Permanent Secretary for Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection Dr. Ed Chomba, and IVL Environmental Research Institute Assistant Director and Head of Team Water, Mr Mikael Olshammar, and SIWI Director for the Africa Regional Centre, Mr. Anton Earle.

The meetings took place on the side lines of the 2019 World Water Week which was held in Stockholm. The World Water Week, organised by SIWI, is a leading annual global event addressing water issues. The meetings were organised by the Embassy of Zambia in Stockholm.

At the meeting with SIWI, Dr. Chomba pointed out that the Zambian Government was keen to ensure that sanitation was given the attention it deserved as opposed to the neglect it suffered in the past. The first ever National Sanitation Summit in Lusaka which brought together delegates from across the world in November, 2018, is the culmination of the increased attention by government to the sector.

Dr. Chomba bemoaned the effects of climate change which he said have led to depletion of water resources in several parts of the world.

He pointed out that before the creation of WARMA in 2011, water in Zambia was viewed as a social good rather than an economic commodity. Zambia's water sector was operating on the 1949 Act before the creation of the Authority.

The Permanent Secretary noted that the creation of WARMA was well intended as it was meant to ensure that there was not only management of the water resource but also equal distribution of the commodity to users.

He called on the world to look at water as an important natural resource just as oil was considered to be in the 20th Century.

In response, Mr. Earle noted that latest developments in Zambia were encouraging particularly with the Water Act of 2011 and the creation of WARMA which put the country in a strong position to effectively face various water challenges.

He advised that there was need for investment in water infrastructure especially with the below-average rainfall that was being experienced due to climate change.

He further advised Zambia to take advantage of SIWI and highlight strides that the country was making towards climate change through platforms such as the annual Stockholm World Water Week or the World Water Forum scheduled for Senegal in March, 2021.

The forum presents an opportunity for the country to expose its efforts in combating the effects of climate change in order to receive the necessary consideration from donors.

The parties agreed that at the invitation of the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Earle will travel to Zambia with a view to explore areas of collaboration with the MWDSEP, in order to establish partnership and support. SIWI will then involve the Swedish International Development Aid (SIDA) accordingly.

The Ministry will also invite SIWI to support in organising the 2nd National Sanitation Summit to be hosted by the MWDSEP in 2020.

And on the agreement to work with IVL Environmental Research Institute to develop water and environmental related projects, Dr. Chomba said it was important for WARMA and IVL to sign memoranda of understanding in order to enhance capacity in the Zambian institution.

The Permanent Secretary noted that necessary laws were in place in Zambia but that the country lacked capacity to adequately implement the existing pieces of legislation.

Dr. Chomba pointed out that Government would be happy to see IVL establish offices in Zambia and assured that he would ensure that office accommodation was provided for the institution.

He further requested for financing for WARMA, particularly that which could be channelled towards institutional support for capacity building.

And at the same meeting, IVL indicated that it wanted to make a positive impact in Africa especially where the issue of raising capacity was concerned.

Mr. Olshammar pointed out that there were various opportunities in research collaboration between the two countries and that IVL could also assist in waste water recycling in Zambia.

He said IVL has done some research into the control of invasive water species such as the Water Hyacinth, which has invaded a lot of water bodies in Zambia and that the institution was ready to work with the MWDSEP and share the knowledge.

The institution has discovered that the hyacinth also acted as a good feed for Tilapia fish which was one of the predominant fish in Zambia.

On the use of hyacinth as feed for Tilapia, the Permanent Secretary illustrated the possibility of creating a value chain, which could include setting up of cooperatives for women derived from WARMA's Water Users Association (WUAs) to establish ventures in fish farming.

Dr. Chomba observed that this would, in turn, result in job creation and contribute to addressing Zambia's 200, 000 tonne fish deficit.

Mr. Olshammar noted that it was possible for Zambia to access seed funding from SIDA through the suggested project of empowering women through fish farming activities. He said IVL will render its support so that Zambia could access the funding.

The two parties resolved that a letter of intent would be submitted to SIDA by MWDSEP through IVL for seed funding in respect of the fish farming project.

Zambia will also send a proposal for mitigation of the hyacinth and waste water recycling in order to access funding from the African Water facility of the African Development Bank (AfDB).

The IVL delegation also included Dr. Magnus Karlsson – Associate Partner, and Mr. Musbau Bello, who is Project Manager.

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