



**SUBMISSION TO THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY,
WATER DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN ZAMBIA**

Date: 20th January 2022

I. Comments on the adequacy of the policy and legal framework governing water resource management.

The water sector in Zambia is guided by various policy documents. These include but are not limited to:

a. National Water Policy (2010)

The National Water Policy (NWP) is a government document which seeks to address cross-sector interests in the water sector with a particular focus on water resources planning, development, management and utilization. The policy addresses water issues in twelve key areas of the economy including food and agriculture, fisheries, tourism, water supply and sanitation, wildlife, mining, industry, environment, energy, land, national heritage, and transport.

For the most part, the Policy remains largely adequate given its scope of coverage. However, there is now need to assess the progress that has been made in its implementation since its adoption in 2010. The Policy lacks an adequate institutional and legal framework as it pertains to monitoring, regulation and sanctioning. As part of an assessment on progress made, these inadequacies should be reviewed. Furthermore, there is need to update the NWP by taking into consideration the key developments in the water sector in Zambia during the last 10 years, as well as developments in the wider international community, particularly as they relate to climate change adaptation.

b. Water Resources Management Act (2011)

The principle legislation for water resource management is the **Water Resources Management Act No. 21 of 2011** which governs overall water resources. The Act outlines the principles which form the basis for managing water sources in Zambia. Additionally, the Act establishes the Water Resources Management Authority (WARMA), a statutory body responsible for managing the quality and quantity of Zambia's surface and groundwater water resources.

There is need to review this Act which was established a decade ago. Specifically, there is need for a more decentralized structure which provides for stakeholder participation. The decentralization process requires many changes in institutional structures, as well as the reallocation of power and funds to provide for the participation of various stakeholders in the governance of Zambia's water resources. Decentralization is linked to greater stakeholder participation. These two principles could lead to a greater sense of ownership in the management of water resources.

II. What should be done to protect and harness water resources?

To protect and harness water resources against the backdrop of increasing demand, water scarcity, weather extremes and other challenges such as those linked to climate change, there is need to:

- Strengthen institutional tools such as legal and regulatory frameworks which govern our water management (e.g., The Water Resources Management Act of 2011) and water pricing to ensure better allocation, regulation, and conservation of water resources.
- Strengthen coordination mechanisms among commercial utilities and National Water And Supply Company (NWASCO), as well as government authorities responsible for land allocation. A lack of coordination between the two has previously resulted in the allocation of residential plots without prior provision of the necessary water supply and sanitation services. This has contributed to the proliferation of private boreholes and poorly constructed septic tanks which has consequently resulted in the contamination of underground water.
- Enhance the regulation of both surface and groundwater extraction in order to preserve water bodies.

- Enhance tree planting programmes in order to protect and restore water basins.
- Invest in innovative technologies for recycling storm water and wastewater as well as technology for developing non-conventional water sources (such as saline water, agricultural drainage water and water containing toxic elements and sediments)
- Seek opportunities for enhanced water storage such as through aquifer recharge and recovery
- Develop information systems/databases which provide details about the availability and distribution of water resources, enable resource monitoring and hydro-meteorological forecast and warning.
- Increase funding to environmental protection to improve and enhance coordination in the management of water resources.
- Ensure the rehabilitation of water and sanitation service infrastructure

III. What are the major challenges impending effective water management?

Zambia has over the years faced a number of challenges in managing Her water resources and these have resulted in; inadequate supplies to meet various needs, pollution, inadequate information for decision making, inefficient use of the resource, inadequate financing and limited stakeholder awareness and participation. Gross mismanagement and exploitation of water resources have been reflected in increasing conflict between different users and uses of water. Major challenges include:

- Unplanned growth of urban centres and expanding populations have increased water demand for food production, industrialization, which are putting pressure on limited freshwater resources and impeding effective water management.
- Unsustainable exploitation of natural resources.
- Different water users (agriculture, domestic and industrial) coming into conflict with each other due to a lack of regulatory mechanisms for its management.
- Meeting basic needs such as providing safe drinking water, protecting ecosystems, increased urbanisation, securing food supplies (more crops per drop), meeting industry's demand and increased energy and water demand which has negative impacts on water availability in the future.
- Water related risks and hazards such as drought, floods, etc. lead to competition over poorly allocated resources.
- Limited investment in water infrastructure and its maintenance thereof
- The cost of effective proper water resource management which includes the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation requires a huge investment
- There is need to attract funding in the sector such as through the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) and other multilateral partners and stakeholders that can fund the management of water resources in order to meet the SDGs in the water and sanitation sector.

Recommendations

- PMRC urges government to ensure the continued inclusion of water management matters into Zambia's National Development Plans
- PMRC recommends that institutional tools such as legal and regulatory frameworks, water pricing, and incentives may need to be revised and strengthened in order to better allocate, regulate, and conserve water resources.
- There is need to run sensitisation and awareness raising campaigns, to ensure that water management starts at household level.
- There is need to promote the widespread installation of water meters in order to track consumption, ensure adequate billing and track leakages for ultimately better water management.
- PMRC urges government to invest in innovative technology to facilitate the reuse and/or recycling of wastewater, storm water, gray water and industrial process water through incorporation into Zambia's overall water strategy as a viable alternative water source. Additionally, there is need to seek opportunities for enhanced water storage, including aquifer recharge and recovery.