



ECA/RCID/102/98

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

**Meeting of Senior Water Resources Officials
from The Zambezi River Basin Countries**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
3-5 May 1999**

**SUMMARY AND PRESENTATION NOTES OF 1997
ECA STUDY ON INTERCOUNTRY COOPERATION FOR
INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OF THE ZAMBEZI RIVER BASIN**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
ESA	External Support Agencies
FAO	(United Nations) Food and Agriculture Organization
IGWA	Interagency Group for Water in Africa
IMF	International Monetary Fund
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SADC/WSU	SADC Water Sector Unit
UN	United Nations
UNSI	United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa
UNACC	United Nations Administrative Committee on Coordination
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
TCDC/ECDC	Technical/Economic Cooperation Among Developing Countries
TOR	Terms of Reference
WB	World Bank
WGW	Working Group on Water of UNSIA

ECA/RCID/102/98

WHO	World Health Organization
ZACPLAN	Zambezi Action Plan
ZACPRO	Zambezi Action Projects
ZAMCOM	Zambezi (River) Commission
ZAMFUND	Zambezi (Development) Fund
ZRA	Zambezi River Authority

SUMMARY

The Background

1. The Working Group on Water (WGW) of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (UNSIA) is co-chaired by the World Bank (WB) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). At its 1996 October meeting at Paris, the WGW identified four African countries (Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique and Uganda) and the Zambezi river basin (at ECA's suggestion) for focus for concerted actions by the UN agencies in the initial phase of implementation of the provisions of UNSIA.

2. The Interagency Group for Water in Africa (IGWA) is the African regional counterpart of the UNACC Subcommittee on Water Resources at the UNHQs, New York. ECA took the initiative, at the request of this Subcommittee, to coordinate establishment of IGWA in 1992 and has since been acting as the secretariat of the Group. At the 1996 December meeting of IGWA, ECA presented a study which it had prepared in 1995, on Problems and Prospects for Intercountry Cooperation for Integrated Development of Water Resources of the Nile river basin. The study was well-received by the representatives of the participating agencies attending the meeting and ECA was requested by them to prepare similar studies for other major transboundary river/lake basins in Africa. Endorsing the decision of the earlier Paris meeting of UNSIA, the Zambezi River basin was recommended for next such study in collaboration with other IGWA member agencies.

The Study

3. In accordance with the recommendations of the two above-noted meetings, ECA took the initiative to prepare the present study. Unlike the study for the Nile river basin (noted above) which was prepared by a short-term outside consultant engaged by ECA, it was decided that the Zambezi study would be prepared in-house by ECA because of lack of resources for external consultant.

The Mission

4. In preparation for this study, ECA wrote early 1997 to a number of concerned UN agencies proposing a joint interagency fact-finding mission to selected Zambezi basin countries and requesting the agencies to participate at the mission. Initially, a number of UN agencies showed interest in participating at the mission. At the end

though, only UNEP sent a representative to join ECA in the last leg of the mission (two out of four selected Zambezi basin countries). The purpose of the mission was to collect data and information for the study and to consult senior officials of the various government and intergovernmental agencies on intercountry cooperation for integrated water resources development of the Zambezi river basin.

Mission Activities

5. During the mission, meetings were held and extensive discussions took place with various senior government officials including some Permanent Secretaries, Deputy Permanent Secretaries and senior technical professionals. Discussions were held with senior UNDP officials in these countries; with senior officials of subregional intergovernmental agencies like SADC, COMESA and ZRA. Discussions were also held with senior officials of UNEP at Nairobi with a view to enhancing UN interagency cooperation particularly between UNEP and UNECA in assisting the Zambezi riparian countries in accelerating the process of water resources development activities in the basin.

Mission Findings

Botswana

6. Botswana shares at least three major international rivers with a number of subregional countries. These are the Zambezi, the Okavango and the Limpopo rivers. Countries (Angola, Botswana, Namibia) sharing the Okavango river already formed a Joint River Commission for integrated development of this basin. In the case of Zambezi also, Botswana is fully committed to cooperation with other countries sharing this basin. Botswana's position is that the subregional cooperation leading to the establishment of Zambezi River Basin Commission (ZAMCOM) is the only sensible way to ensure equitable sharing and integrated development of water resources of the Zambezi basin.

7. Botswana's share of the Zambezi river catchment area is relatively small compared to other countries' share like those of Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Therefore, Botswana looks to these Zambezi riparian countries for taking lead role in any initiative for integrated development of water resources of the basin. Nevertheless, Botswana takes active interest in the negotiation process and routinely attends meetings of the Zambezi basin countries within the framework of the SADC initiatives in this sector.

8. Botswana's position is that no country in a sharedwater basin should take any unilateral action that will adversely affect other country or countries. All contentious issues should be settled through dialogue preferably within the framework of SADC. Botswana believes that the UN agencies can play a positive role ensuring that this universal principle is adhered to by the countries concerned. To this effect, Botswana supports the idea of a framework ECA-African Convention for protection and equitable share of transboundary water resources in Africa.

Mozambique

9. Mozambique is committed to subregional cooperation for integrated development of the Zambezi river basin. Indeed, Mozambique is about to conclude a bilateral agreement (Joint River Commission) with Zimbabwe dealing with all international rivers including the Zambezi shared by the two countries. Mozambique is committed to ZAMCOM and is willing to work with other Zambezi river riparian countries towards its establishment within the context of ZACPLAN and the SADC Protocol on sharedwater resources. Mozambique will also like closer links with the Zambezi River Authority (ZRA) which is presently a bilateral arrangement between two countries only i.e. Zambia and Zimbabwe.

10. Mozambique is concerned about cross-boundary pollution in the Zambezi basin both from the Shire river in Malawi and from the copper belt in Zambia. Mozambique is also concerned with flood problems in the Zambezi basin in the country. Mozambique's view is that flood forecasting and flood flow information could be expedited to Mozambique from the Kariba dam in the Zambia-Zimbabwe border. Mozambique expressed concern about the effect of planned Zambezi water diversion for the city of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. Mozambique feels all major diversion of Zambezi river should be negotiated and agreed upon by all riparian countries before taking any action in this regard.

11. Mozambique currently does not have a national water masterplan. It is felt that the UN and other international agencies could render assistance in preparing such a plan specially in the area of river basin planning. Mozambique can also benefit from training in negotiation process with other riparian countries. Possibility of using TCDC/ECDC approaches in this regard is recognized.

Zimbabwe

12. A large area of Zimbabwe is in the Zambezi basin. Hence, the river is of paramount importance to the country. Zimbabwe depends on the Zambezi river for power generation, irrigation, rural and urban water supply and for various other uses. The Kariba dam and the Kariba lake are joint projects by Zambia and Zimbabwe and are mainly used for power generation.

13. Zimbabwe's national water policy and legislations are being revised. The office of the Water Resources Management Strategy (WRMS) provides policy guidance in this respect. Zimbabwe is committed to fair and equitable share and consumptive uses of transboundary waters and would like to resolve the question of clear and acceptable definition of "international rivers" including the status of tributaries contributing to these international rivers. The UN and other regional and subregional organizations like ECA, SADC can assist in facilitating the negotiation process for this purpose. The various international conventions (the Helsinki Rules and the possible African Sharedwater Convention) and the SADC Protocol on sharedwater would be of relevance in this regard.

14. Zimbabwe recognizes the sensitivity of sharedwater issue in the SADC region and believes that perception of one country's action by another in this area is more important than reality. Zimbabwe believes an excellent spirit of cooperation currently exists among the political leaders of the countries in this subregion and the countries should take advantage of the prevailing situation to resolve all possible issues of contention including sharedwater issues through dialogue and negotiation.

15. The UN agencies can assist in sensitizing the countries on the subregional aspects of sharedwater issues and in promoting their basin-wide integrated management. UN agencies can also assist in capacity building in the subregion specially in creating a Centre of Excellence for training in integrated water resources development and management in the subregion. The other UN roles perceived are in the areas of resource mobilization, environmental awareness campaign at the grass roots levels, conflict prevention and resolution etc.

Zambia

16. Zambia is relatively well-endowed with freshwater resources bulk of which is in the Zambezi river basin. Indeed, the Zambezi river system covers three quarters of the country. The other main river covering the northern part of the country is the

Congo river system. The country has recently (1995) prepared a study on "national water resources masterplan" with assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

17. Although Zambia pledges support for subregional cooperation for integrated management of shared water resources, she does not favour any large scale inter-basin water transfer especially outside the specific river basin area. Zambia welcomes partnership with neighbouring countries and with the UN and other agencies in water resources management for a subregional response to recurring drought and seasonal water shortages in the area.

18. The UN and other donor agencies can play a role in developing a masterplan for irrigation expansion in Zambia. Currently, FAO and IFAD are supporting small scale irrigation projects in the country.

Discussions with COMESA and ZRA Officials

19. COMESA has an Agriculture Unit presently with three professional staff. It is currently involved in an irrigation programme financed by the African Development Bank. According to COMESA officials, water hyacinth is a problem in many parts of the Zambezi river system including the Kariba lake area and the upstream Zambezi. It is a serious environmental problem. COMESA will welcome cooperation with UN and other agencies in addressing this issue in the area.

20. The Zambezi River Authority (ZRA) is a statutory body created by the acts of Parliaments of both Zambia and Zimbabwe and is owned by the two States. The Authority came into being in October 1987 following reconstitution of its predecessor - the Central African Power Corporation. The goals of the Authority is to ensure effective use of water and other resources of the Zambezi more particularly that part of the river common to the borders of the two States.

21. In recent years, the ZRA has undertaken a regular programme of water quality monitoring of the Zambezi river specially in the section common to the two countries and the Kariba lake. ZRA has also been active in assisting the SADC Water Unit and the Zambezi riparian countries in implementing some of the projects under ZACPLAN.

ZACPLAN

22. The Zambezi Action Plan (ZACPLAN) launched in mid-1980's with the initiative of and assistance from UNEP consists of some nineteen projects commonly referred to as ZACPROs. These are divided into two categories. Category 1 comprises eight projects. Category 2 projects inclusive of ZACPRO 9 to 19 presently exists in idea forms only and have not received adequate attention since the adoption of the ZACPLAN. No attempt has yet been made to prepare a programme for implementation of these projects which cover a wide range of subjects and are at present only loosely defined.

23. The number two project (ZACPRO-2) in this series is the establishment of a Zambezi River Commission (ZAMCOM). However, progress towards ZAMCOM has been rather slow mainly because SADC which is coordinating ZACPRO wants first to complete the Protocol for sharedwater resources in the subregion. It is expected that once the Protocol enters into force, work towards ZAMCOM and other river basin commissions in the subregion will receive accelerated attention. It was reported that the establishment of ZAMCOM and other river basin commissions in the subregion would require a lot of lengthy and detailed negotiations among the riparian countries. It was felt that the UN and other agencies could play a significant role in facilitating the negotiation process towards establishment of these Commissions including the ZAMCOM. Meanwhile, SADC established early 1997 a Steering Committee to supervise the implementation of ZACPRO. It is expected that this Committee will form an integral component of the ZAMCOM when the latter is established.

SADC/Water Sector Unit/Lesotho

24. The SADC-Water Sector Unit is involved in the promotion of subregional cooperation for integrated development of water resources in the entire SADC subregion. The SADC takes a wider (subregional) view of the water issue in the entire subregion. To this effect, it is probably the first among the subregions in Africa to have prepared a Protocol on sharedwater resources in the SADC subregion. The Protocol has been so far signed by some 11 countries and ratified by six. It needs ratification by two-thirds of the fourteen member countries of SADC for the Protocol to enter into force.

25. Within the framework of this Protocol, the SADC Water Unit is coordinating the activities in the Zambezi river basin along with those in other river/lake basins in the subregion. The activities in the Zambezi basin mostly involve implementation of ZACPRO within the framework of the ZACPLAN.

Roundtable Discussion on Water in the SADC Sub-region

26. The concept of this roundtable was initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Africa and its preparation is being coordinated by the Lesotho Office of the UNDP. Currently, all countries of the SADC subregion are preparing individual country situation report. Following this, the country reports will be synthesized (aggregated) to form the subregional report which will be considered by high level (possibly ministerial) representatives during the roundtable conference to be held in October 1998. The roundtable discussion will include all aspects of water resources development in the subregion including equitable sharing, protection and management of transboundary water resources. A set of bankable projects for consideration by donor agencies will also be prepared for discussion and approval by the participants at the roundtable. The discussion is expected to result in a strategic plan for water resources development in the subregion.

Discussions with UNEP/Nairobi

27. During these discussions, the roles of ECA and UNEP in accelerating the process of cooperation among the Zambezi basin countries were highlighted. UNEP's commitment in furthering the process of integrated development of water resources of the basin was reiterated. It was also noted that UNEP might be able to allocate some resources in 1998 to facilitate the negotiation process leading towards the establishment of ZAMCOM in particular and to water resources development of the basin in general.

The Zambezi River System

28. The Zambezi river system has the fourth largest basin (catchment) area in Africa and spreads over eight countries. It is of much historical, political, economic and environmental interest to the continent. It is the longest and largest African river draining into the Eastern Indian Ocean. Historically, the lower reach of the river provided a major trade route to Africa for the Arabs in the tenth century and for the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. The main Zambezi river originates in the Bihe plateau of the central African tropical forests bordering Angola, the Congo (DRC) and Zambia. It then flows through Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique and finally reaches the Eastern Indian Ocean near Beira in Mozambique. Its drainage area extends over Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe and covers an estimated area of close to 1.3 million square kilometres. The average annual discharge of the system is in the range of 230 billion cubic meters.

The Socio-economic Setting

29. All eight countries of the Zambezi basin have past colonial experiences and all have inherited developing economic and social structures/systems at the time of their independence in the second half of the 20th Century. All the eight countries presently have democratic political systems in place. Popular participation in decisions making and in developmental activities including private sector participation is gaining momentum in these countries.

30. The estimated 25 million people of the Zambezi basin area live mostly (95%) in the rural communities and depend on subsistence farming with small pieces of arable land and a few domestic animals. The effect of recurring droughts especially the severe ones in recent years is devastating on economic lives of these people. From economic point of view all the eight countries are considered as developing ones and five (Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania) are classified as least developed countries. The per capita GDP ranges from \$120 in Mozambique to some \$350 in Zimbabwe and to \$2800 in Botswana.

Subregional Collaboration Setting

31. A number of subregional intergovernmental agencies are active in the area in promoting intercountry cooperation and in implementing transboundary development projects. These include the SADC, ZRA, COMESA, and the Lusaka based ECA-SRDC among others. A number of UN agencies have also recently carried out several studies on various aspects of development in the Zambezi basin. Details of activities by these organizations are provided in the main text of this study.

32. Based on these findings, some general conclusions are drawn and a number of specific recommendations are made which include inter alia, the following:

Major Conclusions

Current Situation

- (a) A very encouraging environment conducive to inter-country cooperation presently exists in the SADC subregion. This has been largely due to very good political and personal understanding among most of the political leaders in the subregion. Within the framework of this overall understanding for cooperation, the SADC is working on a broad Protocol on sharedwater resources development in the subregion. Once this

Protocol enters into force, the SADC intends to embark on activities related to river/lake basins in the subregion including the Zambezi basin.

- (b) The pace of implementation of activities under ZACPLAN has not been as rapid, as it could have been, for lack of institutional arrangements for intercountry cooperation specifically for the Zambezi basin. Institutional development in this respect has been in turn delayed waiting for the SADC Protocol on sharedwater resources to enter into force.
- (c) Implementation of ZACPRO especially that of ZACPRO-2 leading to the establishment of ZAMCOM needs a lot of negotiations on various relevant issues among the Zambezi basin countries. As a first step to this process, a Steering Committee has recently been constituted to supervise the implementation of ZACPLAN in general and ZACPRO in particular.

Role of ESAs

- (d) The involvement of UN agencies in the overall development of water resources of the basin has been rather limited since the launching of the ZACPLAN, specially in the implementation of ZACPRO. It is generally felt that the UN and other international funding and donor agencies could play a critical role in the basin in various areas such as facilitating the negotiation process among the riparian countries, capacity building, resource mobilization, creating awareness and promoting popular participation (public hearing etc.) in the process.
- (e) A number of Nordic countries have in recent years supported some projects under ZACPRO. However, these supports have been mostly donor-driven and often did not address the priorities set by the Zambezi riparian countries.

Major Recommendations

Acceleration of ZACPLAN

- (i) The pace of work for integrated development of water resources of the Zambezi basin can and should be accelerated. This can be done in full collaboration with SADC and ZRA within the framework of the ZACPLAN. To achieve this goal, there should be intensive and

accelerated level of cooperation among the eight riparian countries in full conformity with the provisions of the SADC Protocol on sharedwater resources. The pace of intercountry cooperation and negotiation process leading to institutional framework for integrated development of water resources of the Zambezi basin can be accelerated without having to wait for the SADC Protocol on sharedwater resources to enter into force. There is precedence of such existing cooperation mechanism among riparian countries of other river basins in the SADC sub-region without having to wait for the ratification of the Protocol. For example, Angola, Botswana and Namibia have already formed a Permanent Commission for development of the Okavango river basin.

ZAMCOM

(ii) Institutional framework is a prerequisite in promoting intercountry cooperation for integrated development of sharedwater resources. Lack of such a framework for the Zambezi basin has hampered progress of development work in the past. Therefore, the process of negotiations leading to the establishment of a Zambezi River Commission (ZAMCOM) complete with a secretariat should be accelerated. The ZAMCOM should be entrusted to prepare and implement a detailed masterplan for integrated development of water resources in the basin.

Role of UN and other ESAs

(iii) The UN and other international agencies can and should play a more active role in the basin specially in facilitating these negotiation processes and thus promote intercountry cooperation for development of sharedwater resources in the basin. These organizations can also assist the Zambezi basin countries in mobilizing resources and in developing and/or enhancing technical and managerial capabilities of the countries in the water resources sector. A more specific area for assistance in this regard would be assistance in establishing a Centre of Excellence for training and higher education in water resources development and management in the subregion.

- (iv) The facilitation of negotiation process could, in more concrete terms, take the forms of: (a) convening, organizing, sponsoring and servicing meeting(s) of the Zambezi basin countries to deal with issues leading to establishment of ZAMCOM (promotion of cooperation through dialogue); and (b) organizing seminars/workshops for policy makers and senior technical people on various aspects of international negotiations for management of transboundary resources including sharedwater resources. This latter capacity building exercise could also include organizing study tours to countries which recently completed successfully international agreements on management of sharedwater resources (e.g. the Indus basin and the Mekong basin countries) with assistance from the WB, IMF, UNDP and others. These should of course be done in full collaboration with SADC taking into consideration the activities being carried out by SADC within the framework of the ZACPLAN. A more active role by ECA and UNEP in particular and the UN system in general, in facilitating this process will accelerate the pace of development and enhance intercountry cooperation in this regard.
- (v) Bilateral donors and other funding agencies can contribute significantly to the development of the subregion by providing resources in terms of grants, soft loans etc. for water and hydropower development in the area. The focus for such assistance could be the implementation of ZACPRO activities already identified by the riparian countries. In funding such projects, however, priority should be given to projects and activities chosen by the riparian countries themselves rather than to donor-driven projects and activities which sometimes end up as being of little or no benefit to the recipient/beneficiary countries. Implementation of such priority projects will establish true partnership in development between the donor and the recipient countries and will enhance the sense of ownership among the latters.

Establishment of a Zambezi Development Fund

- (vi) In order to facilitate and accelerate the process of development in the basin, a Zambezi Basin Development Fund (ZAMFUND) could be established. International, regional and subregional banks could

contribute to the Fund in the form of buying long-term equity in the Fund together with the Zambezi riparian countries.

(vii)

The ZAMFUND could also issue long-term bonds and shares to be sold in the international, regional and subregional markets. Long-term guarantee for these shares and bonds could be negotiated between the governments of the riparian countries and the international and regional banks and other financial institutions. The ZAMFUND could be the main financial force behind the ZAMCOM and could also exercise financial leverage over ZAMCOM in order to make the latter a financially viable and a more or less self-supporting entity.

ECA-African Convention on Transboundary Resources

(viii)

Recent discussions/debates at the global levels including those at the UN General Assembly led to emerging international framework conventions on transboundary water issues. These range from the 1996 Helsinki rules to the International Law Commission articles on non-navigational uses of transboundary water courses. In recent years, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) worked on the "ECE Convention on protection and use of transboundary rivers/lakes" which came into force in October 1996. In line with this emerging global trend, the ECA can possibly initiate actions, in collaboration with other African regional and subregional economic groupings, on an ECA-African Convention on development and management of transboundary resources including sharedwater resources. The long-term need for and benefits of such a Convention are worthy topics for debates at the subregional and regional levels and there appears to be support for such a Convention in some quarters including some Zambezi basin countries.

PRESENTATION NOTES**Slide 1***** October 1996 Paris Meeting of the WGW of the UNSIA**

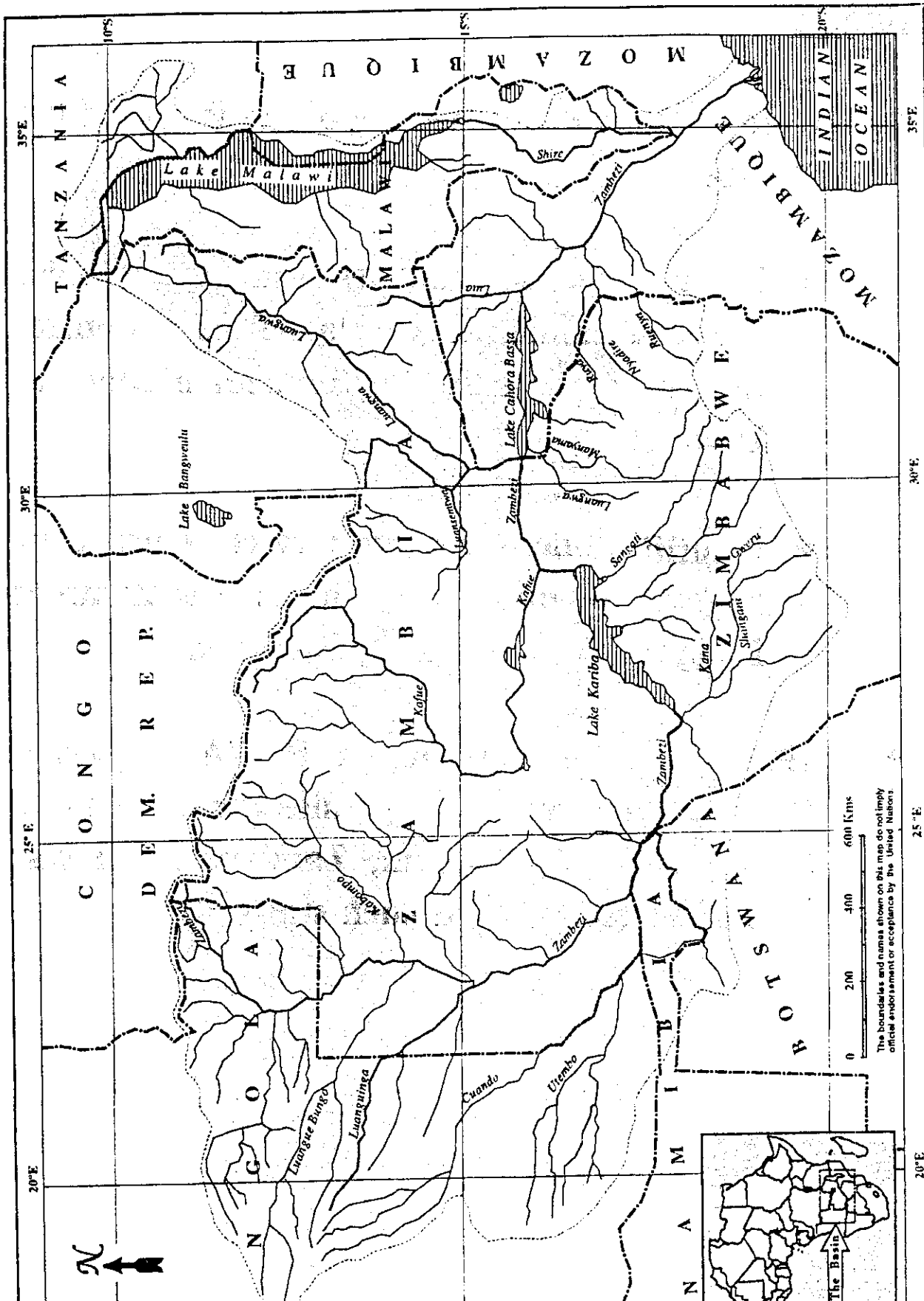
- identified four countries namely Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique and Uganda for emphasis in the first phase of implementation of UNSIA

- identified one transboundary river basin for similar emphasis. This basin was Zambezi River Basin (at ECA's Suggestion)

*** 1996 December meeting of IGWA requested ECA to prepare similar studies for other river basins in Africa. Again, Zambezi basin was recommended for next such study.**

Slide 2

ZAMBEZI RIVER BASIN



Slide 3

Zambezi River Statistics

Length:	3000 kms
Catchment Area:	1.3 million sq. kms.
Average annual discharge:	230 billion cubic meters
Average mean annual rainfall in the basin	930 mm
Maximum	2220 mm
Minimum	530 mm
Irrigation Potential	3.16 million hectares
Area presently under irrigation	147,000 hectares

Slide 4

Eight Countries in the basin

- **Total population in the basin: 25 million**
- **5 least developed; 3 developing**
- **Per capita GNP ranges from \$120 to \$2000**
- **All had colonial past**
- **Most had recent civil and political strife**
- **All now have democratic set-up**

Slide 5

- A number of UN agencies involved e.g. UNEP, WHO, WMO, FAO, WB
- A number of subregional agencies involved e.g. SADC, ZRA, COMESA, ECA-SRDC (Lusaka)
- A number bilateral donor countries e.g. Norway, Germany, The Netherlands and others
- ZACPLAN/ZACPRO

Slide 6

SADC working on subregional protocol on sharedwater

ZRA - mostly for power generation and distribution between Zambia and Zimbabwe

COMESA - has some technical projects in the agriculture and irrigation area.

Slide 7

- **Current conducive political situation and good neighbourly understanding and relations among the SADC countries**
- **Pace of implementation of ZACPLAN/ZACPRO not rapid**
 - **Steering Committee set up for expediting ZACPLAN implementation will constitute basic elements of ZAMCOM**
 - **Role of international agencies not up to expectation**
 - **Bilateral donor aided projects often do not meet the requirements of the countries in terms of relevance.**

Slide 8 Recommendations

- **Acceleration of ZACPLAN implementation**
- **Establishment of ZAMCOM**

Role of International agencies

- **Centre of Excellence for training and higher education in water resources**
- **Facilitate Negotiation for ZAMCOM**
- **Mobilize Resources**
- **Priorities of countries' needs in donor aided projects**
- **Not donor driven projects imposed**
- **Establish ZAMFUND**
- **Work towards African Convention on Transboundary resources including water resources**

Slide 9

- **Collaboration with UNEP**
- **Meeting of Zambezi basin countries and other concerned parties in collaboration with the Roundtable Discussion on water issues in the SADC region**
- **Possible collaboration with other IGWA member agencies**