

Press release

For immediate release

## The AWF and NEPAD-IPPF Foster Climate Resilient Water Resources Development in Southern Africa

**Pretoria, South Africa, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017** – The [African Water Facility \(AWF\)](#) and [NEPAD Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility \(NEPAD-IPPF\)](#) signed on 31 January 2017 in Pretoria, South Africa, a letter of agreement with the Orange Senqu River Basin Commission (ORASECOM) to launch the Climate Resilient Water Resources Investment Strategy and Multipurpose Project Preparation for the Orange-Senqu River Basin, shared by Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa. The co-financed project, amounting to about € 3.5 million, includes contributions from AWF of about € 2 million and \$ 1.2 million from NEPAD-IPPF. The main objective of this project is to promote sustainable socio-economic growth in the basin riparian countries through climate resilient water resources development in the framework of basin wide cooperation led by the ORASECOM. The project will foster enhanced sustainable water resources management of the basin, increased investments based on better planning allowing more multipurpose projects to address the livelihood needs of the communities living in rural and urban areas.

**Ensuring Water Security in Southern Africa.** The Orange-Senqu River Basin originates in the highlands of Lesotho and runs over 2300 km to its mouth on the Atlantic Ocean in Namibia/South Africa. The river basin spans over 1.0 million km<sup>2</sup> and is one of the largest river basins in Africa. It encompasses all of Lesotho, a significant portion of South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. The basin poses complex water management challenges for safeguarding future water security. The central challenge being the assurance of water security under increased hydrological variability compounded by climate change impact.

"Thanks to this support from AWF and NEPAD-IPPF, ORASECOM will develop an optimised water resources investment strategy and plan and select a priority transboundary project which will be prepared at feasibility level. Climate resilience will be integrated in the planning and development of water infrastructure. ORASECOM will also, through this project, reinforce its capacity and institutional development since for the first time it will help riparian governments prepare a transboundary project." said Lenka Thamae, ORASECOM's Executive Secretary.

**Major Economic Impacts on 19 million people.** The Orange-Senqu River basin is of major economic importance to South Africa and Lesotho as it contributes to respectively 26% and 100% of their GDP. The beneficiaries of the project will be the 14 million people living in the riparian communities in the basin as well as 5 additional million inhabitants in South Africa that despite being located outside the basin will benefit from its water resource through water transfer schemes. The water basin resources development will greatly improve livelihoods and engender sustainable socio-economic growth in the region.

*"There are multiple problems related to deteriorating environmental conditions and lack of inclusive water resources development in some parts of the Orange-Senqu River basin to support economic growth and alleviate poverty. The solutions to these problems are to be addressed through optimisation of the water resources development based on balanced economic, social and environmental considerations. This project is part of these solutions"* said Shem Simuyemba, NEPAD-IPPF Manager.

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