

PRESS RELEASE



ORASECOM launches a new project to promote environmental sustainability and water security in the Orange-Senqu River Basin Windhoek on the eve of the 6th Forum of the Parties Meeting.

Windhoek, Namibia 5/12/2019 –Honourable Alpheus G. !Naruseb The Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry; Honourable Kefentse Mzwini, Minister of Land Management, Water and Sanitation Services, Botswana; Honourable Samonyane Ntsekele, Minister of Water, Lesotho; and Honourable David Mahlobo Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation South Africa, launched a regional project to address long-term water security, livelihoods and climate change in the Orange-Senqu River Basin. ORASECOM will implement this project in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The project is aimed at addressing water security in the sub-region through strengthened trans boundary cooperation and the promotion of nature-based solutions. UNDP-GEF has committed investment amounting to USD10.8million (approx. N\$160 million) for ORASECOM. The project will build on the efforts and resources of the Republic of Botswana, the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Republic of Namibia and the Republic of South Africa—the four State Parties that depend on the water from the Orange-Senqu River—to jointly manage the water resources in a sustainable manner.

According to Mr Lenka Thamae, ORASECOM Executive Secretary, the Support to the Orange-Senqu River Strategic Action Programme (SAP) Implementation Project tackles the balance between harnessing sufficient water from the river system while maintaining environmental sustainability, particularly in the face of a changing climate and an unpredictable future.

The project will be executed through four broad work packages: Institutional Strengthening & Policy Reform for Joint Management; Addressing Water Resources Quality; Maintaining the Hydrological Regime and Addressing Land Degradation.

Four demonstration projects will be commissioned: 1) a groundwater desalination project in south-west Botswana to reduce water stress and improve water security of local communities; 2) water quality monitoring and improvement on the Mohakare river catchment in Lesotho; 3) management of Prosopis – Alien Invasive Species- to protect endemic ecosystems and water sources while creating alternative livelihoods in southern Namibia; and 4) rehabilitation and joint management of the Orange-Senqu River ecosystem on the border between Namibia and South Africa.

The demonstration projects will enable basin communities, private sectors, local governments and many others to actively participate in the implementation of the SAP and the ORASECOM Integrated Water Resources Management Plan (IWRM), towards sustainable and resilient future of the basin.

The UNDP Resident Representative in South Africa, Dr. Ayodele Odusola observed that the Orange-Senqu River basin faces emerging development challenges posed by climate change, most prominently manifested as threats to water security. Dr Odusola further stated that water security is critical for the people and industries in the Orange-Senqu River basin and for the sustainable development of the sub-region.

UNDP takes the issue of water security seriously and is working closely with ORASECOM State Parties to design adaptation strategies.

Contact Information:

Naume Kupe

Communications and Knowledge Management Specialist
ORASECOM Secretariat

[Tel:+264 81 633 2764](tel:+264816332764)

Email: naume.kupe@orasecom.org; Skype: naume.kupe

www.orasecom.org

Aune Amwaama

Communications Task Team Member
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry

[Tel:+264 81 277 7855](tel:+264812777855)

Email: Aune.amwaama @mawf.gov.na

Botsalo Thamuku

Communication Task Team Member
Department of water and Sanitation- Botswana

Tel: +267 73107766

EMAIL: btthamuku@gov.bw

About ORASECOM: *The Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM) was established in November 2000 following the signing of the agreement between the four State Parties—Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa. The commission advises the basin states on the development, utilization and conservation of water resources of the Orange-Senqu River. The ultimate aim is to realize sustainable utilization and management of natural resources in the basin, through the implementation of the Integrated Water Resources Management principles and practices. www.orasecom.org*

About the Orange Senqu River Basin

The Orange-Senqu River Basin originates in the highlands of Lesotho and runs for over 2300 km to its mouth on the Atlantic Ocean in Namibia/South Africa. The four States of the Orange-Senqu, River Basin, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa depend on the river system for their hydro-infrastructure, industrial production, agriculture and socio-economic growth to different extents.