



Environment Program Highlights

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Nature Seychelles: Conserving & Restoring Valuable Coral Reefs

Housing approximately a quarter of all marine species, coral reefs are among the most biologically diverse and economically valuable ecosystems on earth, providing a range of ecosystem services including food, habitat, jobs, and protection of coastlines from storms and erosion. Sadly, at least 20 percent of the world’s coral reefs have been destroyed as result of climate change and human activity. With assistance from USAID totaling just over USD 500,000, Nature Seychelles is working to restore coral that have been bleached by intense climatic events over the past ten years. Since inception, the project has created 12 nurseries aimed at culturing multiple coral species and transplanted over 11,000 coral colonies. Nature Seychelles has also produced a vulnerability assessment and stakeholder involvement plan. The plan is a first step towards developing the capacity of local and regional stakeholders to sustain and replicate the project in the Seychelles and the South West Indian Ocean region. Through research and monitoring in partnership with leading international scientists, Nature Seychelles is building local capacity in the management of coral reefs and increasing knowledge of their ecological value. Work is underway on the production of a model tool kit aimed at capturing key lessons learnt on

reef restoration. The tool kit is a manual that will serve as a model for future initiatives in the Seychelles. Nature Seychelles has recently partnered with a private company to re-introduce giant clams. Giant clams, a vulnerable species once prevalent in Indo-Pacific coral reefs, are critical for reef health, filtering harmful waste nutrients from water. Clams are threatened by both natural disasters and human activity.



Resilience in the Limpopo River Basin Program (RESILIM): Increasing Capacity for Improved Management of Natural Resources

In April 2014, RESILIM supported two training needs assessment workshops and a high level briefing in Zimbabwe and Botswana focusing on the latest data on climate change in the region, resilience building of the most vulnerable sectors, and methods to increase collaboration between government and local communities. RESILIM also supported the South African Department of Water Affairs (DWA) in training 150 community members in Water Quality and Waste Management. This activity was part of the DWA’s Adopt –a-River Initiative at the Matsila Village in the Limpopo Province, and was attended by the USAID/Southern Africa Deputy Director, Mr. Steve Callahan. Among the key lessons learnt

is that community level understanding of the relationship between waste water management and water quality is fairly limited. Consequently, there is a greater need to involve local traditional leadership in resilience building in order to increase community level knowledge and understanding of the dual roles that communities and government play in water quality and waste management.



Science Technology Innovation & Partnership (STIP): Fostering Partnerships

On April 3, 2014, USAID launched the Global Development Lab, with the goal of increasing the role of Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnership (STIP) in development. One of the novel programs under the Global Development Lab is the Research and Innovation Fellows Program. South Africa, along with Brazil, Columbia, India, Indonesia, Philippines, and Senegal, was selected to pilot the Fellows Program, which will link US and South African researchers to collaboratively apply science, technology, and innovation to complex development challenges. South Africa plans to place 24 fellows, the most of the seven countries included in the program. The first group of fellows arrives in South Africa in June 2014 and will work with their host institutions for two to nine months. The fellows will be working on issues ranging from quantum computing to developing low-cost, rapid water quality analysis. They will be placed with organizations including



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STIP Continued:

the University of Cape Town (UCT), the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the National Zoological Gardens, and the University of Pretoria.

SAREP Supports Namibia to Create Bwabwata-Okavango RAMSAR Site

In its efforts to conserve biodiversity, improve access to water and sanitation, and support climate resilient livelihoods, the Southern Africa Regional Environment Program (SAREP) collaborated with the Government of Namibia to establish a new RAMSAR Site. This declaration will help to attract international attention to the wetlands of the Okavango River Basin. The Government of Namibia recently announced that the area around the Mahango and Buffalo Core Areas of the Bwabwata National Park, in the north-east of the country, will be Namibia's fifth RAMSAR Site. The Bwabwata-Okavango RAMSAR Site forms an integral part of the Okavango River Basin, covering an area of 46,964 hectares. The site has a common boundary with the existing Okavango Delta RAMSAR site to the south, creating a combined protected area totaling nearly 7 million hectares. This initiative effectively creates the second transboundary RAMSAR Site in Africa, and the first in southern Africa, thereby helping to raise the profile of these important wetlands and, more importantly, the transboundary nature of the ecosystems involved and the consequential need for transboundary collaborative management to protect them. SAREP provided technical support to the Government of Namibia in order to gain optimum momentum in establishing the

Bwabwata-Okavango RAMSAR site. The Minister of Environment and Tourism in Namibia, Honorable Uahekua Herunga, officially opened the site at a special ceremony held on the border of the Mahango Core Area of the Bwabwata National Park on the 14th of February, 2014. In attendance were representatives of regional organizations, including the, Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM), Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA), and delegations from Angola, Botswana, and the US.



USAID/Namibia Country Representative Barry Primm joins the Minister of Environment and Tourism and other dignitaries at the opening ceremony of the new RAMSAR site.

SAREP Supports Management Plan for Botswana's Lake Ngami

The USAID SAREP program has continued its work to improve the management of Lake Ngami by supporting the development of the Lake Ngami Management Plan. The plan

provides guidance on the best ways to enhance the tourism potential for the lake and lays out sustainable resource utilization plans for fish resources, defines protective zones for bird breeding grounds, and demarcates lodge sites, camp sites, and fishing areas. On the 11th of April 2014, the Botswana Ministry of Environment Wildlife and Tourism, in partnership with the United States Government, held a launch event for the Lake Ngami Management Plan. SAREP provided assistance to develop the management plan in collaboration with government and NGO partners. The plan was approved by the district Land Board in late 2013 and will be collaboratively implemented with district stakeholders through the newly established Lake Ngami Community Trust. The objective of the land use plan is to promote sustainable use of ecological resources that benefits local communities while conserving biodiversity and natural resources at this globally recognized site. The development of the management plan is a significant milestone in attempting to preserve the lake. Lake Ngami has the potential to become a travel destination and is a target for eco-tourism projects and scientific studies. As part of the Okavango Delta RAMSAR Site and as a Birdlife International Important Birding Area, it holds great potential to provide sustainable benefits to local communities through tourism.



Charge d'Affaires Michael Murphy and Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Botswana Ministry of Environment, Wildlife, and Tourism, Dr. Manthe-Tsuaneng, hand over a ceremonial copy of Lake Ngami Management Plan to a community member.

SAREP Supports Management Plan for Botswana's Lake Ngami Continued

Botswana Embassy Charge d'Affairs, Mr. Michael Murphy attended the event and in his remarks praised the Botswana Government for their commitment to the shared priorities of environmental conservation, sustainable economic growth, rural development, and poverty eradication. At the same time, Mr. Murphy raised concerns, first raised through SAREP technical work, that the broader Okavango Delta, of which Lake Ngami forms an integral part, faces substantial threats and could cross irreversible thresholds within a decade.



Group photo taken at Lake Ngami, a globally recognized wetland in Botswana

INR: Securing Ecosystem Services through Climate Change Adaptation in the Lesotho Highlands

Through a grant from USAID, the Institute for Natural Resources (INR) works to build capacity for climate adaptation and improve the resilience of livelihoods and ecosystems in the Lesotho Highlands. As the project enters its final year, activities are focused on promoting the uptake of interventions previously identified. INR has supported conservation agriculture demonstrations throughout the Highlands, including the use of new hand held tools and equipment for inserting seed into unploughed land, hoeing the land for weed control, inter-planting of different species of maize and beans to diversify crops, and planting different varieties of maize to compare performance and yield. INR has also supported exchanges with farmers visiting neighboring regions to enhance their understanding of conservation agriculture by meeting farmers who have been practicing these techniques for a number of years (and who have obtained increased yields). INR has coordinated with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to promote conservation agriculture and has also worked with a USAID partner, the Wildlife and Environment Society of Southern Africa (WESSA) to introduce sustainability commons at four INR project sites. The commons provide demonstrations of a number of environmental technologies, including solar cookers, solar ovens, solar water heaters, solar lights/chargers, and two types of energy efficient stoves.



New hand held tool for inserting seed into unploughed land

The U.S. Agency for International Development provides economic, development, and humanitarian assistance worldwide. USAID supports people's efforts to develop themselves and their countries. In Southern Africa, the United States seeks to increase trade and strengthen economic ties within the region, address the HIV/AIDS crisis, mitigate recurrent food insecurity, and strengthen democracy to reduce the risk of conflict in the region. USAID/Southern Africa, located in Pretoria, South Africa, complements and enhances USAID's bilateral programs in the region, supporting unique and innovative regional activities and providing a range of services to assist USAID missions in the region.

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For more information about USAID/Southern Africa's environment program, please visit: <http://www.usaid.gov/southern-africa-regional>