

# **International and transboundary water Cooperation – Namibia case**

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# Presentation overview

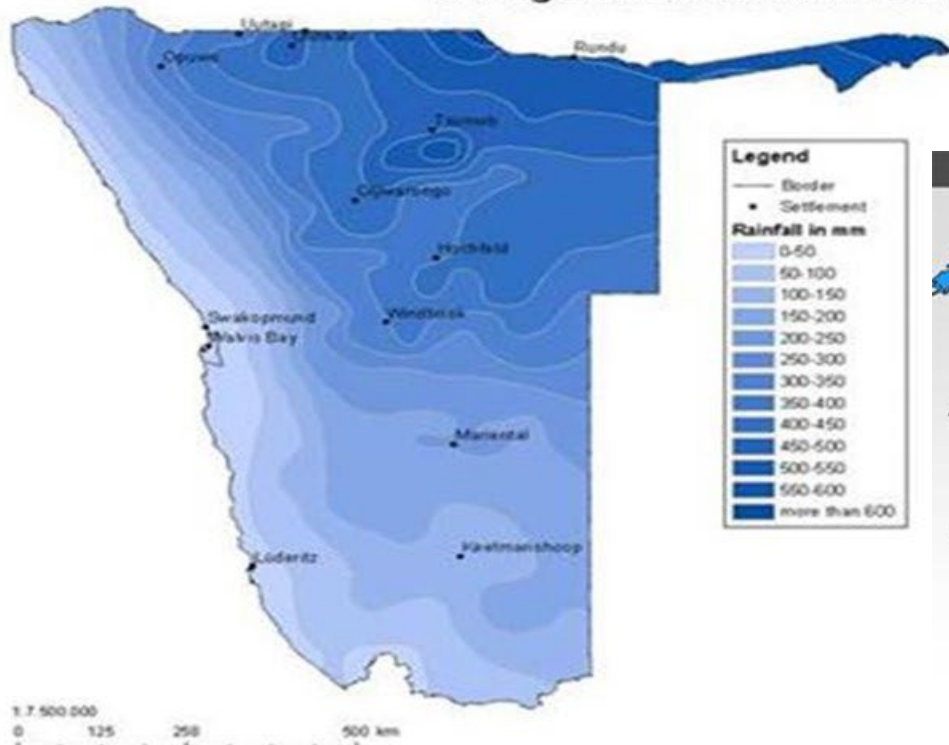
- Namibia and transboundary water
- Existing transboundary water cooperation frameworks
- Successes and challenges related to Namibia's water cooperation
- Namibia's accession to the Water Convention
- Process/timelines, milestones, challenges in the accession process
- Benefits for Namibia in becoming a party to the Water Convention
- Current activities and future plans under the Programme of Work



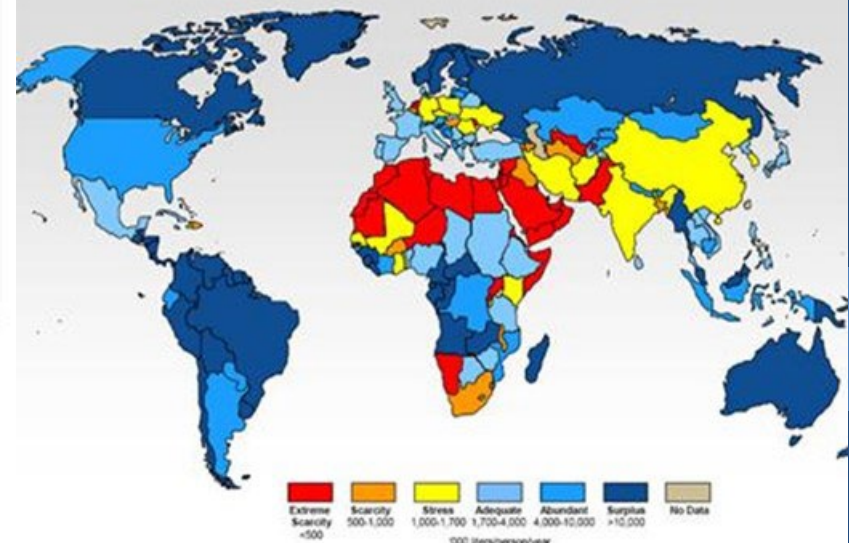
# Introduction

- Namibia is one of the driest countries in sub-Saharan Africa
- Rainfall pattern is erratic and unevenly distributed
- All Namibia's perennial rivers originates elsewhere and are shared with neighbouring countries
- Water Scarcity expected to worsen with predicted climate change impacts

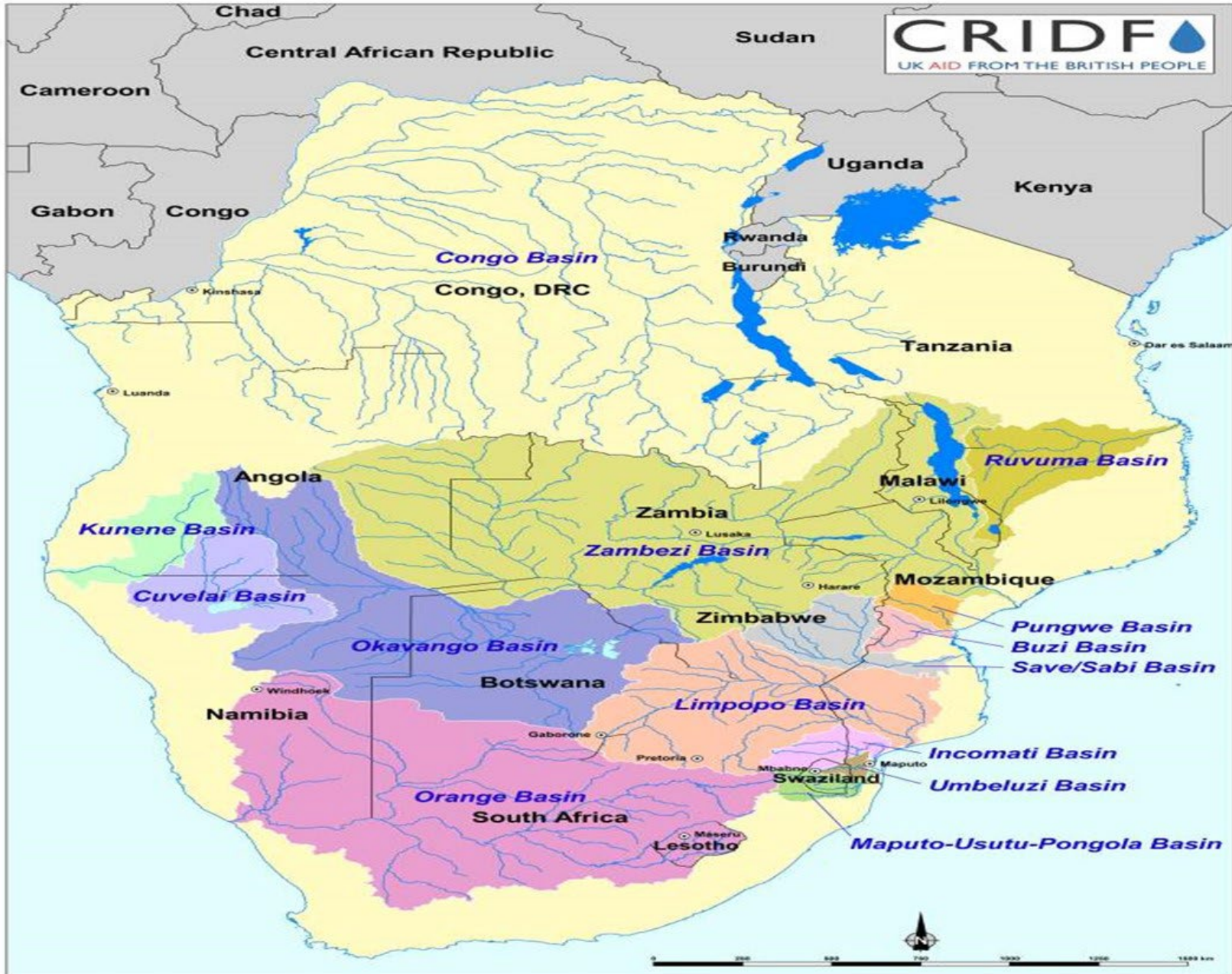
Average annual rainfall in Namibia



Global Per Capita Water Availability (2025)



# Shared Watercourses/River basins



# International Water Cooperation Instruments

A number of instruments have been developed to govern and promote transboundary water management and cooperation

- ✓ 1966 Helsinki Rules
- ✓ 1992 UN Water Convention on the Use and protection of shared watercourses and international lakes
- ✓ 1997 UN Convention on non-navigational uses of shared watercourses
- ✓ Revised SADC Protocol on shared watercourses 2000



# Namibia and International water cooperation

- Namibia has a long history of transboundary water cooperation – 1886 Agreement – Cunene River (First water sharing agreement was signed between Portugal (on behalf of Angola) and Germany (on behalf of Namibia))
- Transboundary water management is rooted in semi-arid climatic conditions
- ✓ River Basin Commissions are established (thru River Basin/watercourse Agreements) according to the international principles to: ***“To provide technical advice to the parties on matters relating to the development, utilization and conservation of the water resources in the shared watercourse,,***
  - ***Advance the sustainable, equitable and reasonable utilization of the shared watercourses.***
  - ***Advance SADC Agenda of regional integration.***



# Existing instruments of international Water Cooperation

Commission	River Basin	Members	Year Established
Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM)	Okavango-Cubango	Angola, Botswana, Namibia	15 September 1994 (under revision)
Cuvelai Watercourse Commission (CUVECOM)	Cuvelai	Angola and Namibia	16 September 2014
Kunene Permanent Joint Technical Commission (PJTC)	Cunene	Angola and Namibia	18 September 1994
Permanent Water Commission (PWC)	Lower Orange River	Namibia and South Africa	14 September 1992
Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM)	Orange-Senqu	Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa	3 November 2000 (revised in December 2018)
Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM)	Zambezi	Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe	13 July 2004



# Why Transboundary Water Cooperation?

- Equitable and Reasonable Allocation from shared Rivers-
- Joint planning, development and management
- Cause no significant harm
- Cooperation
- Promote water diplomacy, peace, security and regional integration
- **Namibia Foreign Policy :**
  - good neighbourliness,
  - principle of territorial integrity and national sovereignty,
  - promotion of regional integration,
  - promotion of equality and mutual respect among riparian states





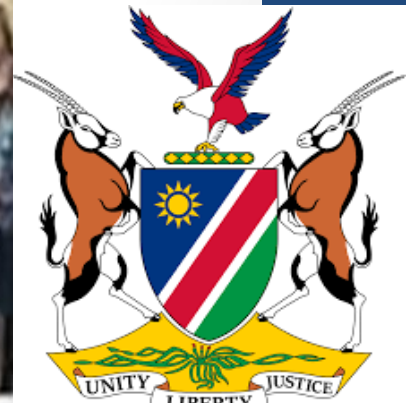
# Some challenges related water cooperation (Namibia specific)

- Limited capacity to deal with transboundary water management issues - negotiation, monitoring,
- Absence of national water allocation strategy
- Low flow during summer months (Oct-Jan)
- Pollution and land degradation (upstream)
- Inadequate data – monitoring network
- Absence of water storage infrastructure on the perennial rivers
- Climate change and climate variability
- Prone to drought and floods



## Process, timeline and challenges to the Accession to the UNECE Water Convention

- The Water Convention 1992 initially negotiated as a regional instrument (Europe)
- It was opened up for other UN non-ECE member states in 2016
- Namibia expressed her interests to accede to the Water Convention during the 9th session of the MOP held in October 2021
- Stakeholders consultations were conducted in February and May 2022
- National Assembly approved Namibia's accession to the Water Convention on 28 February 2023.
- Accession Instruments were deposited in May 2023
- Namibia acceded to the Water Convention family on 8 June 2023



# Benefits for acceding to the Water Convention

- ✓ Like the UN Watercourses Convention, the UNECE Water convention is based on customary international law
- ✓ Acceding to the UNECE Water Convention, offer prospects for enhanced transboundary cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa, conflict prevention and regional stability
- ✓ Twinning agreement between experienced and new-comer parties
- ✓ Finland – Namibia initiated twinning project to develop capacity on implementation on Water Convention.
- ✓ Kick-off Workshop held on 17 and 19 May 2023, Windhoek



# Current activities under the Water Convention

## Exploring the strategy for monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters

### Activities

- ✓ transboundary monitoring exchange visits/study tours between the two Parties
- ✓ sharing of practical examples of the organization and activities of the transboundary Waters Commission

## 2. Exploring the Handbook on Water Allocation in transboundary river basins

- ✓ Building capacity on Practical application of water allocation in transboundary rivers, including legal aspects; tailored demonstrations of the tools and methodologies;



## Capacity building on institutional mechanisms for transboundary water cooperation

- ✓ Support for strengthening capacity on cooperation on transboundary basins, including formulation of transboundary agreements;
- ✓ Assist with finalizing the Namibia's Draft National Water Negotiation Strategy

### **Joint project activities:**

- ✓ Analysing legal basis for transboundary agreements and cooperation;
- ✓ Promotion of the concept of Water Diplomacy
- ✓ Support monitoring

## 4. Capacity building on institutional mechanisms for transboundary water cooperation

- ✓ Support for strengthening capacity on cooperation on transboundary basins, including formulation of transboundary agreements;
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### **Proposed joint project activities:**

- ✓ Analysing legal basis for transboundary agreements and cooperation;
- ✓ Promotion of the concept of Water Diplomacy
- ✓ Support monitoring



# Future engagements under the Water Convention

## Next steps:

- Capacity building workshop for Namibian experts in Finland (Feb, 2024)
- Potential regional workshop in Southern Africa, issues: Water allocation, (Apr/May 2024)
- Exchange of information along the way by e-meetings and e-mails
- Final workshop, summing up experiences, defining way forward (Aug/Sep 2024)

## Twinning Agreement a mechanism towards the implementation of the Water Convention



Thank you!

