MEDIA RELEASE

Ministers to chart the way forward for the Benguela Current Commission

Government ministers from Angola, Namibia and South Africa will meet in the Angolan town of Namibe on Thursday 21 August, to set out medium-term goals and priorities for the Benguela Current Commission – an intergovernmental organisation that provides a mechanism for the three countries to better manage the marine and coastal resources of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME).

The Benguela Current Commission was established in 2013 through the signing of the Benguela Current Convention, a formal treaty that provides a legal framework for cross-border cooperation between the three countries.

At Thursday’s meeting, the ministers will consider a five-year Strategic Action Programme (SAP) that has been formulated to guide the activities of the BCC for the next five years – from 2015 to 2019. The SAP is a wide-ranging document that sets out the policy actions that are necessary to derive optimal economic and social benefits from the resources of the BCLME, while mitigating the environmental problems and issues that threaten the health of the ecosystem.

“The BCLME offers a myriad of economic opportunities for the countries of the region and it is essential that marine resources are utilised to their full potential to boost economic development, but at the same time the countries of the region are highly aware of their responsibility to balance industrial development with sound environmental management,” says Dr Hashali Hamukuaya, Executive Secretary of the Benguela Current Commission.

He explains that the Strategic Action Programme that is to be approved by the ministers in Namibe, provides the blue print for the countries to do just that:

“The challenges are enormous, but the SAP sets out a plan of action and a budget so that the countries can begin to address these issues jointly and cooperatively,” he said.

“We are looking forward to the ministers approving the SAP so that we can get to work.”

The Ministerial Conference of the Benguela Current Commission will be held at the Infotur Hotel in Namibe, Angola. The proceedings begin at 09h00. Members of the Angolan media are invited to attend the opening ceremony.

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