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The book "Water Is Life: Women's Human Rights in national and local water governance in Southern and Eastern Africa" was released in October 2015. It was published by Weaver press. The book was launched in Harare, Zimbabwe, on November 17th 2015 at an event hosted by the Australian Embassy.

The book is edited by Prof Anne Hellum, Prof Patricia Kameri-Mbote (Both of whom are Lecturers at SEARCWL) and Barbara van Koppen. It was funded by the Norwegian Global partnership.

Speaking at the Launch, professor Anne Hellum gave a background to the book, that it was 4 years of legal and empirical research in 4 southern and eastern African countries. It is the 6th in the North-South publications by SEARCWL. She mentioned how the book concentrated on field work and legal analysis as water is key to all Human Rights systems. It is a 650 page volume. The book explores how international and regional human rights embody the right to water and sanitation, the right to participation and the right to non-discrimination and how these have been translated into laws, policies and practices in Kenya, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The book also approaches water and sanitation as an African gender and human rights issue.

Prof Patricia Kameri-Mbote was the keynote speaker who took the audience through the highlights of the book. She brought out some essential elements like how water is affected by climate change with Africa being the most vulnerable continent to climate change. She showed how water can be a source of conflict when not enough. She showed how states having failed to make potable and affordable water available, other actors have stepped in. She showed the many layers and levels that water access goes through before it reaches the vulnerable groups - the women who use it both for domestic and livelihoods alike. Women in water governance was yet another issue. It was interesting to note how the post colonial era had created another set of colonialists and how that has affected access. These she termed colonial continuities of neglect of water and land needs for Africans. The process socialised the new elite into colonial, political economic and social patterns to rule on an inherited political structure. There was much more she spoke of that was revealed by the case studies i.e. the complexities and the contradictions, intersectional vulnerabilities of poor women, the need for greater integration and harmonisation between international, national and local norms.

Dr Ellen Sithole and Justice Chinhengo spoke on water Governance in Zimbabwe. Shocking to all were/are the 1913 Bye-laws for regulating supply and use of water within the Harare (then Salisbury) municipality still in existence. Also the move from municipal control to ZINWA water

management effects in Zimbabwe.

In an interesting 3rd session of the launch, key stakeholders were brought in to speak on addressing economic constraints to the right to water at a local level. These were Shangwa Mavesere, a Bindura town clerk who has successfully managed to put in place a functional system for his municipality mainly through dialogue and getting the community actively participating in problem solving. Ms Loreen Mupasiri representing the combined Harare Residents Association highlighted challenges faced by both the municipality and the residents in terms of service delivery. Dr Kudzai Chatiza, a Director and consultant, Development Governance Harare who teased the house with points to ponder regarding local governance in Zimbabwe, investment on training versus implementation and research on workable solutions versus uptake.

**The book is already on sale at the SEARCWL and at MAZWI Book store for \$25/copy. A discount is being offered for multiple copies which you can buy at \$20/copy.**

**It is also available from African Book collective:"**

**<http://www.africanbookscollective.com/books/water-is-life>**