

UPDATE 1-Zambia to import 300 MW power from Eskom for 6 mths -utility official

(Adds detail, quote, background)

LUSAKA, Sept 24 (Reuters) - Zambia's state power utility Zesco Ltd said on Tuesday it had reached an agreement to import 300 MW of electricity from South Africa's Eskom for a period of six months to ease shortages, its acting managing director said.

Africa's second largest copper producer, Zambia has a power deficit of more than 750 MW because of low water levels at hydropower dams and last week announced it would increase the hours for power rationing as water levels continued to fall.

Acting Managing Director Webster Musonda told reporters that imports from Eskom would start on October 1 and would cost \$22 million a month.

"The negotiations have been concluded and we have an offer on the table. We will spread the cost of importing this power to our customers," said Musonda

In 2017, the country's energy regulator approved a 75% price hike for electricity retail consumers and introduced a flat 9.30 U.S. cents per kilowatt hour tariff for mining companies. (Reporting by Chris Mfula, writing by MacDonald Dzirutwe; editing by Jason Neely)