

Brace For More Electricity Blackouts

March 10, 2020



Despite favourable rainfall activities recorded across Zambia, it has emerged that without addressing pertinent measures, the country will experience worse electricity shortage compared to last year.

This is according to a Joint Committee headed by Zesco and the Zambia National Farmers Union that have observed that unless something urgent is done to preserve the miserly waters thus far collected in strategic reservoirs, the country risks being in a worse electricity situation than last year.

This revelation was made during the Zesco/ZNFU committee meeting held last week in Lusaka.

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averaging 1cm per day while Itezhi Tezhi has been increasing
proved water flows at Chavuma in Zambezi, averaging 4000

Zesco adds that currently, water levels at Itezhi Tezhi were at 31.4 percent, Kafue Gorge at 17.8 percent and Kariba Dam at 11.5 percent.

A favourable outlook should put Kariba at 65 percent at this time of the year.

And Zesco told the meeting that the Zambezi River Authority has allocated both the Zambian and Zimbabwean utilities 11 billion cubic metres of water each for power generation at Lake Kariba, a shared water resource.

Zesco has already utilised 22 percent of this allocation and are generating 367 megawatts of power from Kariba.

At Itezhi Tezhi, some 30 Megawatts is being generated, and 718 Megawatts is being churned out at Kafue Gorge. At Victoria Falls 91 Megawatts is being generated, while small hydros are generating about 30 Megawatts Maamba Collieries and Ndola Energy are producing 267 megawatts and 56 megawatts, respectively, while 35 megawatts is being generated through solar systems.

With the current water inflows, the meeting observed a grim electricity situation and noted that strategic measures have to be taken now to ensure that the country does not plunge into total darkness for failure to preserve water for future electricity generation.

One urgent and extremely important strategic measure could mean an immediate increase in load management until water levels are seen to improve after future quarterly reviews.

Analysis

The solution to beating electricity blackouts is embracing energy mix. Hydro power generation, solar energy, wind power, thermal power including gas. Depending on Hydro power generation is proving to be problematic.

In as much as the energy mix may not match the capacity of hydro power generation, it has the potential to supplement hydro power generation which is failing to adequately meet the demand for electricity.

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