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## WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (WARMA)

### PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2023

#### NAMWALA FLOODS OF SATURDAY 7TH JANUARY 2023 EXPLAINED

The Water Resources Management Authority (WARMA) is mandated by the Water Resources Management Act No. 21 of 2011, to conduct drought and flood forecasts.

On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2023, flash floods were reported in Namwala town specifically in Corporative Compound, Show Grounds, Mafta, Bambwee and Chikwata areas. In order to understand the cause of the floods, it is important to note that there are two types of floods; flash floods and river floods. A flash flood is a rapid rise of water along a stream or low-lying urban area and usually occurs within six hours of a significant rain event and is usually caused by intense storms that produce heavy rainfall in a short space of time. Riverine floods or river floods on the other hand are the type of flooding where a river's water level swell to the point of overrunning the river banks and has the potential to threaten the immediate area. Depending on where the river is located, the damage could range from flooded roads, submerged bridges and building or settlements, to destruction on crops and animals.

The floods in Namwala town were therefore as a result of high rainfall intensity within a short period of time, exacerbated by lack of proper drainage in the dambo areas. Our flood monitoring system predicts river floods usually with lead time of 10-30 days. However, floods caused by high rainfall intensity within a short period falling outside the river network may not be detected quickly by the system. A ground verification of the river network indicates that rivers in Namwala and surrounding areas are still below the flood mark or threshold. However, WARMA shall continue to closely monitor the situation to prevent loss of lives and property.

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