

Floods blamed on Rhodesia

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MOZAMBIQUE has blamed Rhodesia for the recent flood disaster in the Zambezi Province. Radio Mozambique said the sluice gates at Kariba Dam were suddenly opened without warning.

The broadcast, monitored here, said the torrent of water released from Kariba threatened to rupture the walls of Cabora Bassa Dam further downstream.

"The Cabora Bassa technicians had no alternative but to open the dam's sluice gates, when the Zambezi was already in flood, and this resulted in a disaster without precedent," the radio station said.

The floods left thousands of people homeless.

In Salisbury, a spokesman for the Central African Power Corporation denied Radio Mozambique's claim, saying that the corporation gave "adequate notice to Cabora Bassa of its intention to open the flood gates this season".

This was in accordance with usual practice, and the corporation was in contact with the authorities of the Mozambique dam "at all times", a statement said.

It was not possible to avoid spilling—mainly restricted to three gates—because of the exception-

ally high rains in the middle and lower catchment areas of the Zambezi River, as well as the high inflow of water into Kariba.

Restricting the outflow to three of the six gates at Kariba—holding back about 10 000 million cubic metres of floodwater—had reduced the degree of flooding that could have occurred "to the benefit of those downstream".

The floodwater from Kariba accounted for only 40 percent of the inflow into Cabora Bassa lake.

It added that the levels at Lake Kariba were still "very high" and that the flow over Victoria Falls was above average. Continued spilling would be necessary until about the middle of the year.

BODIES

● Radio Mozambique also reported that 100 bodies of miners killed in an explosion at the Moatize coal mine, Tete Province, late last year had been recovered by East German technicians.

The bodies were recovered after water had been pumped from flooded areas of the mine.

The Moatize mine is still working at only 30 percent capacity and the radio station reported the East German experts had been brought in to help the Mozambique Mines Department to improve safety.