

## Water a priority for southern African scientists

The Environmental Long-Term Observatories of Southern Africa (Eltosa) held its fifth annual general meeting at the Sefapane lodge in Phalaborwa from October 22 to 26, 2007.

Many environmental challenges, such as global climate change, occur over large regions and are not constrained by political boundaries. The multi-national network of scientists that make-up Eltosa recognises the need to monitor and respond to many shared environmental changes occurring across the entire southern African region. Scarce water resources is problem affecting all member states and has been identified as a priority for research by Eltosa. The group is currently working on a proposal for funding of long-term monitoring of natural water resources to submit to Nepad. The member states, comprising Mozambique, Namibia, Botswana, Malawi, and South Africa further highlighted capacity development as a key challenge and agreed that the training of more African postgraduate students is vital.

Eltosa focuses on medium to long-term research, from five years to decades where "knowl-

edge of long-term processes and episodic events is gathered through site-based long-term monitoring and large-scale processes can be made clear by comparing data from distributed sites," says Johan Pauw, former chairman of Eltosa.

Prof Almeida Siteo of Mozambique was elected as the new chairman for the next two years. Delegates attending the AGM included Johan Pauw, Dr Tony Swemmer and Prof Tim O'Connor from SAEON (South African Environmental Observation Network); Prof Almeida Siteo, Valerie Macandza, Paulo Sithoe and Bernard Guedes from Mozambique; Prof James Chimphamba and Prof Eston Sambo from Malawi; Dr Mogo-disheng Sekwhela and Dr Sue Ringrose from Botswana, Dr Joh Henschel and John Irish from Namibia and as guest speakers Prof Paul Dirks from AfricaArray, Wits University, Anneline Morgan and Michael Nxumalo both from the National Research Foundation, Luke Mumba from NEPAD, Dr Wayne Twine from Wits University, Craig McLoughlin and Judith Kruger from the Kruger National Park and Avinash Chuntharpursat from SAEON.