

Benguela agreement signed

• STAFF REPORTER

FISHERIES Minister Dr Abraham Iyambo says training is the insurance policy for sustainable fisheries management and for the protection of the fragile environment in the southern African region.

"I pray that more people are trained in the region, as the current demand for skilled staff exceeds the supply," he said.

Iyambo made these remarks at the signing of the Benguela Current Commission Interim Agreement, held at the Two Oceans Aquarium at the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town on Tuesday.

The BCC is a joint structure between Na-

mbia, Angola and South Africa, aimed at helping the three countries to utilise the marine and coastal resources of the Benguela Current Large Ecosystem (BCLME) in a sustainable and integrated manner.

Iyambo said scientific research had shown that the three countries must co-operate in the management of shared fish stocks.

"We have no choice. We cannot gamble, but use scientific information to base our decisions on," he said.

He said it was commendable that the three countries had embarked on an integrated management of marine resources through the Ecosystem Approach Fisheries (EAF) in the



Photo: UNDP

SEALED ... Namibia's Fisheries Minister Dr Abraham Iyambo (right) signing the Benguela Current Commission Interim Agreement in Cape Town on Tuesday. On the left is Mines and Energy Minister Erkki Nghimtina, who co-signed for Namibia.

region, which is one of the projects BCLME gave birth to.

The BCLME programme originated at the International Conference on the Benguela Current held at Swakopmund in 1995. The

programme has secured funding from the Global Environment Facility through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

A number of marine scientists, technicians and managers in the

region have been trained under the BCLME regional training programme funded by the governments of Norway and Germany.

At the same occasion, UNDP Associate Administrator Ed Melkert said fisheries was particularly important for the livelihoods of coastal communities and the BCLME programme could make an important contribution to the sustainable management of crucial resources.

The agreement was signed by Iyambo, Angolan Deputy Minister of Fisheries Pedro Joao, South African Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Marthinus van Schalkwyk and Melkert.