

Sunday, Lusaka (April 17, 2022)



## **PRESS STATEMENT CEJ**

### **CEJ YEARNS FOR TIMBER AUDIT REPORT**

Centre for Environment Justice- CEJ says it is looking forward to a Timber Audit Report from Government following the resumption of Issuance of Timber Export Permits.

On 8th April 2022, Green Economy and Environment Minister Collins Nzovu announced the resumption of Issuance of Timber Export Permits following a suspension in January this year. Mr. Nzovu explained that the resumption followed the remarkable progress made in the audit process on the operations of the Forestry Department as well as printing and delivery of Timber Export Permit Accountable Documents by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning.

Commenting on the development, CEJ Head of Research Freeman Mubanga says his organization is equally hopeful that the use of Timber Export Permits Accountable Documents will improve accountability by eliminating the risk of fraud in the management of timber.

Mr. Mubanga welcomed Mr. Nzovu's revelation that the process leading to the issuance of new Timber Concession Licenses will commence before the end of April after the Audit of stocks is complete.

He also welcomed the Minister's revelation that harvesting, processing and trading of Mukula Timber will remain suspended until the required procedures and guidelines are finalized. The CEJ Head of Research noted with concern reports that Zambia was losing an estimated US\$500 million annual loss due to illegalities in Zambia's timber industry.

He said CEJ welcomed the New Dawn Government's decision to suspend the issuance of Timber Export Permits to help control the extraction of the depleting natural resource. Mr Mubanga said that the disparity between timber exports and revenue remains huge

#### **Issued By:**

Freeman Chiwele Mubanga (Mr.)  
Head of Research  
Centre for Environment Justice