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## **CHIRUNDU WATER SITUATION WORRYING**

Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) Executive Director Maggie Mwape has described the water situation in Chirundu District, Southern Province, as worrying.

Ms Mwape says CEJ is therefore, working with the World Wide Fund for Nature - WWF Zambia, Chirundu District Administration and Centre for Technology and Development Trust- CTDT to complement the Government's effort in addressing the challenge in the district.

She says a recent tour by CEJ team in four wards in Chirundu District namely; Musaya, Ing'ombe Ilede, Sikoongo and Njame revealed untold misery requiring urgent attention to save livestock and human lives.

Ms Mwape stated the nearest water point in Musaya Ward is servicing over 2, 000 people walking a long distance of over 10 kilometres.

She says pregnant women, young people, women and the old aged women also que up for water at the same point.

For Njame Ward, Ms Mwape says about 4, 000 households walk over 10 kilometres to collect water from the nearest dam which is also a water point for animals such as cows, goats and pigs.

The CEJ Executive Director called for accelerated efforts to increase water use efficiency, reduce water stress and ensure available, sustainable water for all.

She says the move is important if Zambia is to address the challenges and achieve universal and equitable water access for all by 2030 as outlined in SDG 6.

"While individual contributions are vital, governments still have the obligation to provide safe and reliable drinking water sources to people through long-term solutions," Ms Mwape said.

She said Zambia had too much reliance on surface water such as rivers and lakes as well as groundwater which was not sustainable for the future due to the climate reality and increasing water demand from the population.

"Strategies such as the application of improved rainwater collection systems, construction of ferro cement tanks for rainwater harvesting technologies, rehabilitation of dams or creation of canals from Zambezi River in the medium to long term coupled with renewable energies can be used in Chirundu," she said.

The CEJ Executive Director called for the adoption of innovative and long-term solutions to ensure water for all that will protect the peoples' health, livestock and help drive sustainable development forward.

"I further call upon other sector agencies to ensure safe water for all through the development and implementation of water safety planning, strengthening systems and capacity for drinking-water quality surveillance and monitoring," she said.

Ms Mwape called upon cooperating partners, business entities and financial institutions to help in providing safe cleaning water for the people of Chirundu.

She said people were often forced to rely on drinking water sources that may not be safe when water is scarce.

"They may also lack sufficient water for basic hygiene to wash themselves and their clothes, cooking and drinking and may fail to prevent infection including from foodborne and waterborne diseases," Ms Mwape said.

She says water remained a basic human right.

"No matter who we are or where we come from, we are all entitled to the basic human rights of clean air to breath, clean water to drink , and healthy land to call home," Ms Mwape said.

## **CEJ MEDIA**