

Sunday, Lusaka (December 19, 2021)



## **PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HIT BY CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS**

Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) has learnt with sadness that people with disabilities go through the worst form of suffering in the wake of climate change.

CEJ Executive Director Maggie Mwape says her organisation has since launched a Disability Inclusion Climate Action (DiCA) Project in Chirundu district with support from WWF Zambia.

She explains that the project is an initiative under the Amplifying Voices for Just Climate Action (AVJCA) which is a 5-year programme (2021-2025) supported by the Dutch government under the power of voices framework.

Speaking during the launch in Chirundu District, Ms Mwape says the DiCA project is aimed at amplifying the voice of people with disability in the climate action agenda and seeks for locally-sharped novel solutions to climate change challenges especially those affecting people living with disabilities (PWDs), thereby, leaving no one voices.

She revealed that the project will be implemented in Musaya, Sikoongo, I'ngombe Ilende and Njame wards respectively.

The CEJ Executive Director bemoaned that to date, the rights of person with disabilities have received limited attention in the context of the UNFCCC.

"In the Cancun Agreement adopted at COP16 in 2010, Parties identified person with disabilities as one of the segments of the population whose human rights are actually affected by the impacts of climate change," she said.

Ms Mwape says there is an urgent need to raise awareness and build capacity of disabled people's organisations (DPOs) around climate issues so that they can support advocacy and the inclusion of people with disabilities in planning, decision-making and implementation of climate strategies.

"We must treat climate change as an immediate threat, just as we must treat the connected crises of nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste, as immediate threats," the CEJ Executive Director said.

She stated that Climate change is the ultimate long term problem which calls for making decisions today, bear costs today so that adverse consequences are avoided, dangerous consequences, many decades into the future.

"We are already experiencing the symptoms of climate change, especially with a hotter and drier climate in Zambia. For example, our target communities for this climate Action project are walking 20-30 kilometres to find a water point which is serving more than 3000

household and used for both human and animals. And having children as young as 7 years walking 12 Kilometres per day to the nearest school," she said.

Ms Mwape urged stakeholders to enter emergency mode.

"Climate Action Commitments and Long-term targets are empty promises if they aren't backed by immediate action and adequate financing. We cannot undo the mistakes of the past. But this generation of political and business leaders, this generation of conscious citizens, can make things right. We must Act Now. We are not Safe!" she said

Ms Mwape has recognised the efforts of the New Dawn administration towards climate Action and environmental Protection by creating a dedicated Ministry of Green Economy and Environment.

"Also the commitments made by our global leaders to end deforestation by 2030 at the recent COP26 in Glasgow UK of which the Zambia Head of State is among the leaders who signed. As for Zambia, to achieve this commitment we shall need investment in bankable projects to address issues of energy, sustainable alternative livelihoods, forest ecosystem restoration among others," she said.

Ms Mwape further urged the government to consider increasing budget allocation towards Environmental Protection in the next budget from 0.6% to 5% if Zambia is to achieve the aspirations of the government in addressing effects of climate change, green economy, deforestation and sustainable energy.

"CEJ appreciates its partners WWF Zambia, Bread for the world Germany and ICNL USA for the generous support rendered towards our programmes. Further thank our convening partners for the Environmental Protection Dialogue - EPD; UNDP, ActionAid, Kalumbila Mineral Limited," she said.

And Chirundu District Administrative Officer (DAO) Oneil Chiiya says the New Dawn Government welcomes progressive initiatives aimed at addressing the impacts of climate change as the District is already experiencing the effects.

## **CEJ MEDIA TEAM**

---

Plot 269, Off Twin Palm Road, Ibex Hill  
Lusaka – Zambia

**Website:** [www.cejzambia.com](http://www.cejzambia.com); **Twitter:** @CEJZambia2010

**Facebook:** <https://facebook.com/cejzambia.org>