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**PRESS STATEMENT**

**ZESCO BID CONTROVERSY: A WAKE-UP CALL FOR ZAMBIA'S FOREST INDUSTRY- CEJ**

Centre for Environment Justice -CEJ says the recent controversial ZESCO bid for importation of wooden powerline poles is a wakeup call on Zambia to scale up investment in the forest sector.

CEJ Head of Research Freeman Mubanga says it is pointless to complain that no foreign company must be involved in bidding when Zambia has failed to meet demand.

He says some local suppliers have been importing poles from the same countries that ZESCO has now engaged which entails that Government has cut out middle men. Mr. Mubanga has since urged Government to increase the availability of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the forestry sector to increase investment.

The CEJ Head of Research states that PPPs will allow large scale government projects in the forestry sector as witnessed in other countries.

Mr. Mubanga says the development would further combine private sector technology with public sector incentives to complete work on time and within budget.

Recently, ZESCO Limited Board Chairperson Vickson Ncube said the company opted to engage foreign firms for the supply of wooden poles because Zambian companies do not have adequate capacity to meet the demand

**Issued By:**

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