

Sunday, Mafinga (6th August, 2023)



CEJ CONVENES TRADITIONAL LEADERS DIALOGUE TO END DEFORESTATION IN MAFINGA DISTRICT

Government has paid tribute to the Centre for Environment Justice - CEJ for spearheading the Stop the Chop Campaign in Mafinga District, Muchinga Province, which is the source of the Luangwa River.

Mafinga District Commissioner Boyd Kaonga further saluted the Department of State of the United States of America and the Zambia United States Alumni Association, for their invaluable support in the Campaign.

Mr. Kaonga said deforestation and land degradation are matters of utmost concern for the Zambian Government.

He said the Zambian Government recognizes the devastating impact deforestation has on the environment, biodiversity, and the well-being of citizens.

Mr. Kaonga was speaking at the official opening of the Traditional Leaders Dialogue convened by Centre for Environment Justice - CEJ in Mafinga District, Muchinga Province.

The Mafinga District Commissioner said the District, with its rich natural resources and biodiversity, is not immune to deforestation challenges.

He said the District is grappling with illegal logging, unsustainable agricultural practices, and population pressure which has put pressure on forests, threatening their existence.

Mr. Kaonga, however, said reassured by the unwavering commitment of traditional leaders and communities are committed to finding solutions to pressing issues leading to deforestation.

He said the presence of Chiefs and other stakeholders at the dialogue exemplified their dedication to the welfare of the people and the protection of the natural heritage.

"Your wisdom, knowledge, and experience hold the key to unlocking the path towards a sustainable and harmonious coexistence with nature. The Zambian Government firmly believes in a collaborative approach to addressing these challenges. We acknowledge the indispensable role of traditional leaders in safeguarding our environment and fostering development at the grassroots level. As guardians of our customs and traditions, your guidance will undoubtedly lead us towards sustainable practices and the preservation of our natural resources for future generations," he said.

The Mafinga District Commissioner said the Dialogue was a platform for collective action, an opportunity to explore innovative and practical solutions that align with cultural values while providing alternative livelihood activities that promote prosperity without harming forests.

"Together, we can build bridges between conservation and development, ensuring that our communities thrive while our environment flourishes. I urge all of us to actively engage in the discussions, share your invaluable insights, and envision a future where our forests remain lush, our biodiversity thrives, and our people prosper through sustainable livelihoods. Let us seize this moment to develop a joint action plan that embodies our commitment to end deforestation and protect our environment.

Meanwhile, Centre for Environment Justice - CEJ Head of Research and Studies Freeman Mubanga said his organization was pleased to be well received in Mafinga for the Stop The Chop Campaign which was launched in the District last year.

Mr. Mubanga said the Campaign identifies challenges of the high rates of deforestation in Mafinga District and their proposed alternative solutions.

"This is why today we are here to hold the Traditional Leaders Dialogue for Mafinga District so that together, we can identify the main drivers of the key challenges and brainstorm solutions with the full involvement of stakeholders to achieve an Action Plan which we can follow for resource mobilization and actualization of the solutions.

Issued By: CEJ Communications Unit

.....
Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ)

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

Visit CEJ website: <https://cejzambia.com/> and Facebook: <https://facebook.com/cejzambia.org>

Call: +260 54713003 / +260 964 244255 / +260 973 389859

Email: info@cejzambia.com