

Monday, Mafinga (7th August, 2023)



CHIEF MUYOMBE ADVOCATES FOR BAN ON FLUE-CURED TOBACCO TO SAVE TREES IN MAFINGA

Chief Muyombe of the Yombe speaking people of Mafinga District, Muchinga Province, has urged Government to ban flue-cured tobacco because of devastating effects on the environment.

The Traditional Leader says flue-cured tobacco demands cutting trees in large quantities for tobacco leaves to be hung into curing barns, where heated air is generated to dry the leaves.

Chief Muyombe said Government should instead promote Burley tobacco which is air-cured by hanging the leaves in well-ventilated barns, and the tobacco dries using heat from the sun.

He was speaking during a Traditional Leaders Dialogue convened by Centre for Environment Justice - CEJ which is implementing the Stop The Chop Campaign, launched in 2022, with support from the Government of the United States of America and the Zambia United States Alumni Association (ZUEA).

"The tobacco growers on the Malawian side have run out of trees and are getting it from the Zambian side. I therefore, called on Government to provide Forest Scouts to protect cross border wood fuel trading across the border. May I state that Malawi is already struggling with rainfall after cutting down trees for tobacco curing," he said.

Chief Muyombe also called on stakeholders in Mafinga to work as a team in addressing environmental issues as opposed to working in isolation.

"Government must spearhead plans to ban the system of slash and burn agriculture known as Chitemene System and introduce alternatives that are environmentally friendly," he said.

Meanwhile, Chief Mwenechifungwe of the Fungwe speaking people of Mafinga District, Muchinga Province, called for the promotion of growing sorghum, by using sustainable methods for growing finger millet because sorghum does not require the Chitemene system.

"Deforestation has hit my area because tobacco is a booming business in Malawi. Also in the valley side of my Chiefdom, we have witnessed illegal timber harvesting which is causing deforestation near the source of the Luangwa River," he said.

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