

Sunday, Chongwe (27<sup>th</sup> August, 2023)



**CHONGWE GRZ, CIVIC LEADERS WORRIED ABOUT DEPLETING GROUND HYDROLOGY AS CEJ LAUNCHES 'CLIMATE ADVOCACY, ACTION'**

Chongwe District Commissioner, Evans Lupiya is concerned at the depleting underground water in his District.

Dr. Lupiya has since thanked Centre for Environment Justice - CEJ for launching a project dubbed “Strengthening Civil Society Voices for Climate Advocacy in Zambia”.

He said Government in Chongwe will support the project funded by United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), covering five districts namely Lusaka, Chirundu, Luangwa, Chongwe and Rufunsa.

"CEJ is very much welcome in Chongwe District. I am particularly interested as District Commissioner because I oversee the whole District in terms of what is happening. When you talk about a District, you are talking about human beings. There are a lot of communities that are affected by environmental issues. We have so many challenges that are related to the environment in Chongwe District like erratic water," he said.

And Chongwe Mayor, Christopher Habeenzu called for effective methods of communication to educate people on environmental sustainability.

"The buy in should start from the community, all the way up to policy makers. We welcome you and believe that with what you have said you are definitely on the right track. We will give you all the support. From our end this is something that should have happened like yesterday. This is because we know that we are under threat whether it's development in terms of physical infrastructure, agriculture, sand mining or charcoal burning, it will just disturb the environmental balance and consequently have an effect on Climate Change," he said.

Mr. Habeenzu said there was need for proper planning to utilize the water that runs into the Kafue River up to the Indian Ocean.

"We boast about having a fair share of water resources in the Southern African region so what are we doing about this to help us maintain the environment? Are we necessarily going to continue with the underground mining of water thereby depleting the underground hydrology? What Policies are we putting in place? That in itself can affect even how the vegetation is going to thrive. How are we going to sustain the zoological part of the equation?" he asked.

Mr. Habeenzu said Chongwe has continued to face erratic water supply because of the effects of Climate Change.

"You mentioned the challenge of water. We have a huge problem in Chongwe. From August to September, we completely run out of water in Chongwe. In the meantime, the population of Chongwe is increasing. Every day, all of you want to have a piece of land in Chongwe. The pressure on resources is ever increasing. As a District, we need to a proper sustainable plan. Going into the future, people must say yes Chongwe grew but there were measures that were put in place.

This came to light at a Mapping Exercise marking the Centre for Environment Justice - CEJ launch of a project dubbed, "Strengthening Civil Society Voices for Climate Advocacy in Zambia".

Mr. Habeenzu said the project, funded by United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) covering five districts namely Lusaka, Chirundu, Luangwa, Chongwe and Rufunsa would help transform Chongwe District from an environmental point of view.

Meanwhile, Centre for Environment Justice - CEJ Executive Director Maggie Mapalo Mwape said the transformative initiative aims to empower Civil Society Organizations in Zambia to play a pivotal role in advocating for climate action and environmental sustainability.

Ms Mwape said CEJ will continue engaging with stakeholders in executing the project up to 2025.

"Now that the project has been launched in Luangwa, Rufunsa and Chongwe, we shall proceed to launch the project in Chirundu and Lusaka respectively. I am accompanied by Acting Head of Programmes Mr. Haggai Nyambe and Head of Logistics Mr. Patrick Kashanga to ensure a smooth Programme," she said.

Ms Mwape said the success of Zambia's National Adaptation Planning (NAP) processes and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) implementation in the country hinges on the participation of several stakeholders including the Civil society movement.

"It is for this reason that CEJ is building the capacity of CSOs in climate adaptation and implementation of nationally determined contributions," she said.

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