



CALL TO ACTION

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIALOGUE 2023

THEME: ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY AND EQUAL PROTECTION

By the Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) jointly with the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment and with support from the Bread for the World (BftW), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Biocarbon Partners, First Quantum Minerals, HIVOS, ActionAid Zambia, Trade Kings Group, Musika and Sweden Sverige.

The **2023 Environmental Protection Dialogue (EPD)** held in Lusaka, Zambia, from **10th to 12th October 2023** with more than 350 delegates participating at the Mulungushi International Conference Center (MICC) under the theme ***Environmental Equity and Equal Protection***. (This is the fourth following the successful convening of the First, Second, and Third Environmental Protection Dialogues in 2020, 2021, and 2022).

The multi-stakeholder delegates who participated in the 4th EPD were government Heads of Department, Traditional Leaders, Civil Society Organisations, Youth and Women Groups, Cooperating Partners, Development Partners, Embassies, Private sector, Academia, Environmental legal practitioners, Environmental Activists and Advocates, State Regulatory Bodies, Community groups and the Media. The Republican President His Excellence Mr Hakainde Hichilema was invited and accepted to officiate the 2023 EPD. The President was represented by the acting Minister of Green Economy and Environment who is also the Minister of Tourism.

THE DELEGATES, gathered at the **4th Environmental Protection Dialogue** from the **10th to 12th of October 2023** at the Mulungushi International Conference Center (MICC), under the theme, ***Environmental Equity and Equal Protection*** in Lusaka, Zambia; convened successfully by the Centre for Environment Justice and Ministry of Green Economy and Environment, with support from the Bread for the World (BftW), United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP), Biocarbon Partners, First Quantum Minerals, HIVOS, ActionAid Zambia, Trade Kings Group, Musika and Sweden Sverige

NOTING that the issues deliberated upon at the EPD 2023 and resolutions thereof, were timely and calls for urgent actions and strategizing among delegates and stakeholders.

RECOGNIZING the crucial role of collective aspirations and tireless efforts among stakeholders, Civil Society, Government, Cooperating partners, traditional leaders, and the private sector, among others.

REAFFIRMING the theme and principle of Environmental Equity and Equal Protection are principally enshrined in the Environmental Management Act; the National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA), the 8th National Development Plan specifically the Environmental Sustainability Pillar, appropriate Sustainable Development Goals including No. 13, 15 & 17 with the latter emphasizing global partnerships in sustainable development; conventions including the Rio de Janeiro on Environment and Development; and the Kyoto Protocol on limiting and reducing greenhouse gases (GHG) and carbon emissions to operationalize the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCC).

RECALLING that the themes and combined commitments of the First, Second and Third Environmental Protection Dialogue, and henceforth the 2023 theme of Environmental Equity and Equal are collectively reflective of the aspirations of global declarations such as the aforementioned Rio de Janeiro on Environment and Development and the objectives of Zambia's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), the Environmental Management Act, 2011: Implementation status of the National Environmental Action Plan and Environmental Fund, seeking to promote a culture of environmental equity and equal protection in developing countries like Zambia by safeguarding ecosystems and habitats.

BEARING IN MIND outstanding support and leadership with efforts specifically dedicated to addressing climate change, environmental justice and the rule of law will be necessarily required and always accorded by the government, our traditional leaders, the private sector and all well-meaning stakeholders to escalate efforts for the country to attain acceptable standards of Environmental Equity and Equal Protection of the people and natural resources.

FIRMLY CONVINCED that the 2023 Environmental Protection Dialogue particularly and its predecessors, are action-oriented platforms and annual calendar events in Zambia whose future implementation strategies and frameworks must be supported, particularly operating as platforms for engagement of government, traditional leaders, communities, cooperating partners, private sector, civil society organizations, academia, youth, and women by deliberating among others.

FURTHER FIRMLY CONVINCED that all the delegates and concerned partners will continue with the collective resolve of unwavering commitments to upholding Environmental Equity and Equal Protection and strengthening the role of traditional leaders in environmental sustainability for sustainable development in Zambia, on the margins of the 2023 EPD.

CONCERNED that the absence of a clear environmental justice and implementation system including courts to address cases of injustices, abuses, and violation of environmental rights and damages to the environment are contributing causes of environmental inequities and the destruction of Zambia's vital ecosystems and habitats that have led to the loss of rare fauna and flora species.

FURTHER CONCERNED that, the unintentional or intended limited consultation and exclusion of communities and their representatives, including the absence of our traditional leaders in important environmental policy, formulation and investment impact assessment processes has far-reaching consequences, especially jeopardizing their objectives of safeguarding human rights and dignity, fairness, environmental justice, respect for the rule of law, and restoration of endangered ecosystems.

THE DELEGATES OF THE EPD THEREFORE CALL AND APPEAL FOR:

1. Build strong partnerships that facilitate green investments and projects that benefit both the private sector and local communities.
2. Strengthen inclusive environmental governance including the traditional leaders' role in land-based investments and natural resource management.
3. Promote public-private partnerships for private sector financing to support biodiversity conservation and community wellbeing.
4. Upholding of environmental protection as a human right and enhancement of enforcement mechanisms and strengthening of community rights.
5. Implementation of climate policies and access to climate finance for the most vulnerable, including women and girls, people living with disabilities and other marginalised groups who are disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation and climate change.
6. Strengthening environmental monitoring, compliance and enforcement in the various industry sectors.
7. Partner commitment to the EPD and TLC sustainability and implementation of resolutions as these platforms provides a unique forum for stakeholders to share insights, experiences, expertise and co-create solutions.

8. The reinforcement efforts to halt biodiversity loss and combat desertification, drought and land degradation, including through the implementation of existing environmental agreements, and to ensure that ecosystems are resilient and continue to provide their services.
9. The sustainable management of lakes and rivers by the Zambian Government to protect, conserve, and restore as well as sustainable use.
10. Addressing climate change as a persistent crisis that affects all provinces, especially in mining areas to achieve sustainable development which requires collaboration with various strategic partners.
11. Actions to prevent, combat and eradicate illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, due to its major economic, social, and environmental impacts it contributes to the rural livelihoods, and undermines good governance and the rule of law.
12. Establishment of a special Environmental Court that shall play a major role in environmental protection in response to growing environmental crimes. Zambia has witnessed an increase in environmental crimes such as pollution, poaching, illegal mining and construction of structures in ecologically sensitive areas.
13. Partner support to conduct inclusive environmental justice trainings at all levels in all 10 provinces of Zambia.
14. Support for a child summit on environmental justice and rights that will bring together children from all parts of the Country.

ACKNOWLEDGING the significant role that the Zambian government, development partners, corporating partners, corporate entities and private sector plays, we call for sustainable partnership and collaboration in holding the Environmental Protection Dialogue and Traditional leaders caucus, as well as implementing the resolutions.

Done at Lusaka, Zambia, 20th October, 2022.

Date of Release, 20th November, 2022.

2023 EPD & TLC Partners

