

Wednesday, Solwezi (20<sup>th</sup> March, 2024)



### **NO LOADSHEDDING IN MY CHIEFDOM BECAUSE WE PROTECT ENVIRONMENT, OWN POWER STATION - CHIEF NTAMBU**

Chief Ntambu of the Lunda speaking people of Mwinilunga District, North Western Province, says his Chieftom is not experiencing loadshedding because of a hydropower generation plant in the area.

The Traditional Leader has since paid tribute to First Quantum Minerals (FQM) for complementing his efforts in protecting and restocking natural resources the once depleted ecological region.

This came to light at a Traditional Leaders Caucus on Ending Forest Fires, organised by Centre for Environment Justice -CEJ- in Solwezi District, North Western Province.

The Traditional Leader said his Chieftom is now venturing into Carbon Trading through a company in Kenya working with West Lunga Conservation Project which is supported by FQM.

Chief Ntambu said in addition to the West Lunga Conservation project, FQM is supporting the community with modern equipment for honey production, modern abattoir, butchery and a bakery which is in the undertaking.

"It is a matter of leadership. Before I became a chief, I lived on the Copperbelt. I stayed there for a long time after school without going back home. My home, Ntambu, was a heaven on earth because we had practically everything. We had plenty of rivers, a lot of fish, wild animals and we never lacked anything. But over the years, things started declining," he said.

Chief Ntambu said the onset of civil wars in Angola and Congo DR saw refugees from the two countries converge on his Chieftom, depleting animals and fish resulting in local people suffering.

"When I was on the Copperbelt, I would visit home and I could see the difference that Ntambu was no longer the way it used to be. How do we take it back to the days of Ntambu being heaven on earth. It needed leadership. When time came in 1997, the people of Ntambu

installed me as their chief. I left everything that I had on the Copperbelt including businesses just to go back and serve. My life as a person has been anchored on servitude. The first thing upon my installation as chief was to restore the natural resources that were in Ntambu. After experiencing the poaching and mismanagement of natural resources, you would the type of reception that I got," he said.

The Lunda Chief said he resolved to protect natural resources when he was installed as a Chief on Saturday, August 16, 1997.

"On Monday, I called for a meeting with all the Headpersons. I told them that there was no more destruction of natural resources that is why I decided to come to Ntambu. There was huge resentment from the people who did not want to hear that. I insisted that I was not going to back down because I promised the subjects that I want to restore natural resources which would make them happy in the long run after suffering temporarily," he said.

Chief Ntambu said Adamson Mushala's resistance against the One Party State of President Kenneth Kaunda also negated environmental protection efforts as Government Game Guards ran away, leaving the Game Management area vulnerable.

"How do we restore natural resources without Government interventions and there is opposition from subjects including foreigners from Angola and Congo DR? I started with the youth sensitising them on the importance of conserving natural resources. The youths observed that they were suffering as compared to the way their parents lived in childhood. They said how do we do it? That time there were rifles G3 for poaching purposes. I said since you have access to the rifles, go and protect the natural resources using the fire arms which went on for some years as I was lobbying Government to intervene. I lobbied Government to go back to protect natural resources in Ntambu but they refused. I told Government that should anything happen to my youths who are going to protect the natural resources unarmed, I will blame Government for not protecting natural resources and it's people by blowing it to the world. I proposed that if Government is not willing to go to Ntambu, they needed to give arms to the youths to protect themselves as they go to the forests but they refused saying the subjects were civilians. I asked Government to teach them how to handle arms which they agreed after some time. They trained the subjects and I requested that they be given arms because they were trained. They refused to give arms to the subjects insisting that they were civilians but I asked why they trained them. I asked Government to second few Officers to go to Ntambu to work with the youths and they sent them because I was too insistent. Officers and youths worked together in patrolling," he said.

Chief Ntambu said FQM helped his subjects with allowances 15 years later, after working as volunteers, and restocked Ntambu Community Game Reserve which now has elephants, buffaloes and other species that were completely depleted.

"After 15 years, FQM through Kalumbila employed a Wildlife Manager who learnt that subjects in Ntambu worked voluntarily to protect natural resources of which a month later, he announced that Kalumbila had agreed to sponsor the youths working as volunteers. FQM bought the youths clothing and allowances. After some time, the Government recognised our efforts by bringing in more Wildlife Officers to complement our efforts. Ntambu Chiefdom has recorded success because it had no animals but now has plenty of elephants, buffaloes and other species that have come back. We now wanted to empower our people for them to believe that the natural resources belong to them. Ntambu Community Game Reserve was formed because FQM was happy with our efforts knowing that we would keep the animals once given based on history. The mine helped Ntambu Community Game Reserve with animals," he said.

Chief Ntambu said the world responded with more projects like the Remnipass Project and the current G7 Project.

"Everyone who opposed the idea years ago is now behind us. To protect forests, we discourage shifting cultivation but gave subjects permanent places for agricultural purposes. A company called Petauke Land Use has been engaged to give certificates of land use to every body for permanent use to free land and empower women. Certificates are given to the immediate family members that include a man, wife and children. In case man dies, the wife inherits the land so that no one from the man's family will claim ownership following the demise of the man. We have a policy in Ntambu that all assets in the Chiefdom belong to the people be it minerals, rivers or trees. We have a power station in Ntambu. Here in Zambia you are getting hours of loadshedding but in Ntambu we have 24 hours of power brought about by Rural Electrification Authority (REA). We told REA that every asset in Ntambu belongs to the people of Ntambu, therefore, let us partner in order to have a say in our assets," he said.

Among the Chiefs in attendance was Dr. Chief Mumena of Kalumbila District, Senior Chief Sailunga, Chief Kakoma (Representative) as well as Chief Ntambu all from Mwinilunga District.

Others are Chief Lumpuma of Lufwanyama District, Chief Musaka, Chief Mulonga (Representative), Senior Chief Kalilele (Representative) and Chieftainess Chikola of Mushindamo District and Chief Kapijimpanga (Representative) of Solwezi.

Issued By: CEJ Communications Unit

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