

Saturday, Lusaka (5th October, 2024)



CSOs CRITIQUE 2025 NATIONAL BUDGET FOR FALLING SHORT IN CRUCIAL AREAS

Civil Society Organisations in the environment space have observed that the 2025 national budget, despite having commendable initiatives, falls short in crucial areas that determine the country's stance on economic recovery and resilience.

Addressing journalists in Lusaka, Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) General Secretary Bishop Emmanuel Chikoya said the reductions in funding for vital sectors, particularly those addressing climate change and agriculture, give a negative picture of Zambia's progress.

Bishop Chikoya recommended reallocating a portion of the FISP budget to meet the national food balance sheet deficit, which is 2.1 million metric tons of maize grain.

He further suggested that the budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development be increased to a minimum of 2% of the total budget to reflect the sector's share of national revenue.

The Clergyman also recommended that renewable energy projects be pursued parallel with efforts to electrify rural areas and modernize traditional energy infrastructure.

He emphasized that renewable projects must reach marginalized groups and contribute directly to poverty reduction, rather than solely focusing on commercial or industrial applications.

Bishop Chikoya proposed a phased approach where immediate energy needs like electrification and petroleum are prioritized in the short term, while renewable energy investments scale up gradually over the next few years.

He noted that recruiting 2,000 teachers is a step in the right direction but may not be enough to resolve the teacher-to-pupil ratio problem on a larger scale.

Meanwhile, Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) Executive Director Maggie Mwape said that while the 2025 budget allocation for environmental protection has a modest overall increase,

sectoral cuts in key areas, such as the green economy, raise concerns about Zambia's progress toward sustainability goals.

She recommended that future budget allocations factor in inflation to ensure sectors such as environmental protection can maintain operational capacity.

Ms. Mwape called for reallocating resources to sectors with high potential for climate resilience and sustainable growth, particularly green economy initiatives. She also advocated for strengthening administrative efficiency and exploring public-private partnerships to bridge funding gaps and enhance program effectiveness.

Earlier, Nsama Chikwanka, the National Coordinator of Publish What You Pay (PWYP) Zambia, a global coalition advocating for transparency and accountability in the extractive industries, urged the government to ensure that the benefits of Zambia's mineral resources are shared equitably among its citizens.

Issued By: CEJ Communications Unit

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