

Sunday, Serenje (7th July, 2024)



EXPERTS CALL FOR LAND LAW REFORM TO PROTECT VULNERABLE GROUPS

Zambia Land Alliance (ZLA) Project Coordinator Elias Simbeye has called for increased advocacy for a review of land laws and policies to safeguard the land rights of vulnerable groups in light of increasing large-scale land acquisitions for investments.

Mr Simbeye said this in Serenje during a presentation on the Land Rights Situation in Serenje District, at a Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) organised Traditional Leaders and Community Symposium supported by Bread for the World (Germany) through the Resilient Initiatives for Sustainable Environment (RISE) Project.

He observed that in some cases, investment projects displace communities without adequate compensation resulting in loss of livelihood, disputes over land ownership between investors and community members.

Mr Simbeye stressed the importance of consulting affected community members before approving large-scale land acquisitions for investments.

He also emphasized the need to continue raising awareness of land rights and community participation in decision-making processes.

Serenje Town Council Environmental Planner Maponde Chandamali said the local authority has been promoting community consultation meetings before projects commence to get grievances.

She, however, said community members are in some cases not interested in participating in consultative meetings but only show up after a decision has been made.

The Council Official said the local authority faced challenges in Muchinda Chiefdom before the installation of the Chief as developers would buy land directly from the people without following the correct procedure.

She said the Local Authority is determined to change the narrative going forward.

Meanwhile, Vera Toyanga from the Forestry Department in Serenje said forests are being encroached on by people being displaced by developers.

Issued By: CEJ Communications Unit

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