

Monday, Lusaka (14<sup>th</sup> October, 2024)



## **OVER-EXPLOITATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES, POLLUTION INCREASE NATURAL DISASTERS GLOBALLY – UNDP**

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) says the over-exploitation of natural resources and pollution have led to increased natural disasters.

UNDP Deputy Resident Representative for Zambia Laurent Rudasingwa stressed that a healthy environment is crucial for the full enjoyment of human rights, including the right to a dignified life, health, housing, clean water, and sanitation.

He warned that without a healthy environment, extreme global trends, such as Zambia's current droughts, could become more frequent and intense.

Mr Rudasingwa said this at the 5th Environmental Protection Dialogue (EPD) organized by Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) in Lusaka.

The UNDP Deputy Representative highlighted the event's consistent success over the past five years, attributing it to the strong and positive efforts of the participants.

He called for changes to reverse these detrimental developmental gains.

Mr Rudasingwa noted that the triple threats of biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change disproportionately affect the most vulnerable, marginalized, and excluded communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic, he said, has exposed deep inequalities in wealth distribution, resources, justice, and security.

He emphasized the critical connection between human rights and environmental protection, making the pursuit of environmental justice a priority.

Mr Rudasingwa reiterated UNDP's commitment to promoting greater access to justice for those affected by environmental issues and strengthening legal frameworks and institutions.

He highlighted the role of law in protecting, conserving, and restoring the environment.

Mr Rudasingwa reaffirmed UNDP's unwavering support for sustainable environmental management and addressing climate change impacts.

He expressed gratitude for the efforts of all participants and emphasized the importance of continued collaboration to achieve environmental justice and sustainable development.

Meanwhile, CEJ Board Member Edah Chimya Gondwe highlighted the growth and influence of the platform since its inception in 2020, emphasizing the relevance of the theme "Strengthening Environmental Law for Thriving Communities" to the current challenges faced by the nation.

Ms. Gondwe noted that the CEJ has always believed in the power of dialogue to drive positive environmental action.

She mentioned that the EPD has evolved into a space for diverse stakeholders to engage, collaborate, and find solutions to environmental challenges.

Ms Gondwe said this year's dialogue marks a milestone, bringing together a broad coalition of government ministries, civil society, traditional leaders, corporate partners, the private sector, international agencies, and communities, all sharing a vision for a sustainable future.

She gave special recognition to international guest speakers from various organizations, including the United Nations Environmental Programme(UNEP), Reality of Aid Africa, Greenpeace Africa, and Southern Africa Resource Watch among others.

Ms. Gondwe expressed gratitude for their commitment and participation.

Reflecting on the journey from EPD 2020 to the present, Ms. Gondwe spoke about the growth, resilience, and collective action witnessed over the years.

The CEJ Board Member acknowledged the complex and multifaceted environmental challenges confronting Zambia, such as land degradation, pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change impacts.

She stressed the importance of having robust legal and institutional frameworks to address these issues.

Ms. Gondwe emphasized that environmental laws form the backbone of efforts to protect natural resources and promote sustainable development.

However, she pointed out that laws alone are not enough; effective implementation, compliance, and enforcement are crucial.

She highlighted the need for collective action to ensure that environmental laws benefit the people, especially vulnerable and marginalized communities who often bear the brunt of environmental degradation.

Issued By: CEJ Communications Unit

.....  
Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ)

-----  
Plot 269, Off Twin Palm Road, Ibex Hill, Lusaka -Zambia  
Visit CEJ website: <https://cejzambia.org/> and Facebook: <https://facebook.com/cejzambia.org>  
Call: +260 954 713003 / +260 964 244255 / +260 973 389859  
Email: [info@cejzambia.org](mailto:info@cejzambia.org)