

Wednesday, Kabwe (17<sup>th</sup> July, 2024)



## **STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS IN ZAMBIA THROUGH EU-FUNDED PROJECT ROLLED OUT IN KABWE**

A European Union - EU funded project 'Strengthening the Respect for Environmental Rights in Zambia (SR4ERZ)' has trained Rights Holders in Kabwe on essential knowledge about environmental rights, pertinent laws, and the proper channels for reporting violations.

Gracing the occasion, Centre for Environment Justice - CEJ Executive Director Maggie Mwape acknowledged the government's efforts to address environmental violations not only in Kabwe District but across Zambia.

She emphasized that the workshop is a crucial part of the "Strengthening the Respect for Environmental Rights in Zambia (SR4ERZ)" project.

Ms Mwape said the initiative is a joint effort involving HIVOS, the Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ), and the Zambia Institute of Environmental Management (ZIEM), generously supported by the European Union.

She explained that the project is implemented in five districts: Kabwe, Sinazongwe, Serenje, Kitwe, and Mufulira.

The CEJ Executive Director said the main objective of the project is to bring about meaningful improvements in Zambia's environmental rights framework.

Ms Mwape said by empowering civil society and rights holders like yourselves, the project aims to establish a strong system that safeguards and respects environmental rights.

She stated that the three-year project focuses on enhancing technical knowledge, refining laws and policies, raising public awareness, and ensuring accountability on environmental matters.

Ms Mwape believes that through these efforts, they can cultivate a well-informed and proactive community of environmental advocates.

She emphasized that rights holders have a crucial role in exercising and upholding environmental rights within their communities.

The CEJ Executive Director said by building capacity, the aim is to empower participants to identify issues, report effectively, and demand accountability from those in authority.

Ms Mwape highlighted that the training is particularly significant in Kabwe, where the impacts of lead mining have led to severe environmental violations and health issues.

"Your increased awareness and knowledge will play a crucial role in addressing these issues, documenting violations, and advocating for policy changes to ensure a clean and safe environment," she said.

Ms Mwape stated that the initiatives aimed at mitigating environmental damage and promoting sustainable practices are essential steps forward.

"By the end of this training, we expect you to have a deeper understanding of your environmental rights and responsibilities. You'll be equipped to properly document and report violations and understand effective advocacy strategies for necessary policy changes," she said.

"I encourage all of you to actively participate in this training. Engage with the material, ask questions, and acquire the skills needed to become champions of environmental rights. Together, we can create a Zambia where environmental rights are upheld for the benefit of current and future generations. Your empowerment is crucial in holding duty bearers accountable and driving positive change. Let us work collaboratively towards a brighter, greener future for all," she said.

Speaking at the same event, Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Haggai Nyambe highlighted both Human and Environmental Rights.

CEJ COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

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