

Monday, Nyimba (9th December, 2024)



CHIEF NDAKE CALLS FOR ACTION AGAINST WITCHWEED IN NYIMBA DISTRICT

Chief Ndade of Nyimba District in Eastern Province has called on the Government and various stakeholders to respond to witchweed, which is frustrating agricultural efforts in his area.

The Traditional Leader said he has met various technocrats about the challenge, but there has been no satisfactory response.

He made these remarks when the Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) team paid a courtesy call on him in Nyimba.

Chief Ndade also remarked that traditional leaders opposed any attempts to introduce or legalise policies that could phase out indigenous seeds.

He stated that Chiefs did not appreciate plans for a law against planting or recycling certain seeds, as it advocated for the use of hybrid seeds.

He expressed uncertainty about the position of the government on the issue, noting that the government's stance was unclear and that the matter seemed close to reaching Parliament.

Chief Ndade highlighted the growing demand for land and food due to the expanding Nyimba Central Business District (CBD) and increasing business opportunities.

He pointed out that natural resources, particularly forests, are being overexploited.

Reflecting on past farming practices, he mentioned that decades ago, farming without fertilisers was highly productive, but now excessive fertiliser use has led to issues with weeds that are difficult to manage.

He emphasised that the outcomes of engagements, such as those with the CEJ, are crucial for sustaining efficient and effective resource usage.

Meanwhile, the CEJ Programme Coordinator for Agriculture and Water Security, Robert Chanda, stated that the project, funded by We Effect in collaboration with the Zambia Climate Change Network, aims to provide training to farmers.

He explained that most of the training would focus on agroecology, which differs from conventional agriculture practices that have led to soil degradation due to heavy fertiliser use.

Mr Chanda mentioned that the project seeks to promote traditional agricultural methods and the use of indigenous seeds, helping farmers realise they can grow crops without relying on external inputs.

He noted that before the introduction of fertilisers, farmers managed to cultivate their land without them.

He, however, said the reliance on fertilisers has led to land degradation over time.

The CEJ Official emphasised that the project aims to promote food security and environmental justice by encouraging sustainable farming practices.

Mr Chanda added that the project, which began in September, has already included activities such as Environmental Protection dialogues with CSOs and farmers in the Nyimba District.

He expressed hope that the activities planned by CEJ would have a long-term impact, despite the project's short-term nature.

Mr Chanda outlined the first planned activity as training farmers in agroecology, which has commenced.

He added that the project would supply indigenous seeds to farmers and support them with post-harvest handling training.

Mr Chanda highlighted that the project focuses on empowering women and youth, aiming to start with demonstration plots to showcase the benefits of these practices.

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