

Sunday, Petauke (15th December, 2024)



CHIEFTAINNESS MWANJABANTU ADVOCATES FOR INDIGENOUS SEEDS TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

..... salutes CEJ, We Effect for Gender and Climate Justice in Food Systems project ...

Chieftainess Mwanjabantu of Petauke District in Eastern Province has urged citizens to revert to indigenous seeds, citing the lack of climate resilience in hybrid seeds.

She expressed concern that many of her subjects were gaining weight not from healthy food, but from poor diet-related suffering.

The Traditional Leader highlighted that traditional seeds used to provide real energy, especially to children.

This discussion arose during a courtesy call by the Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) at her Kaumbwe Palace in Petauke District, where they introduced the Gender and Climate Justice in Food Systems project.

Funded by We Effect in collaboration with the Zambia Climate Change Network, the project aims to train farmers in agroecology.

Reflecting on the past, she noted that decades ago, they spent entire days in the fields eating horned melon, cucumber, pumpkins, and sweet potatoes, which are now scarce.

She commended CEJ for promoting the return to ancestral practices that relied on indigenous seeds and predicted a bleak future due to the poor germination of hybrid seeds compared to the climate resilience of local maize seeds.

Meanwhile, Petauke District Commissioner Martha Mulenga stressed the urgent need for partnerships to support local farmers.

She stated that Petauke was among the 87 districts affected by drought last farming season.

The DC emphasised the importance of providing seeds that could sustain the upcoming rainy season, forecasted to last from 11th November to March.

Ms. Mulenga underscored the necessity of quality inputs, particularly lime, to address soil depletion.

She urged continued reinforcement of such messages, despite many farmers not adhering to the advice.

The Senior Government Official acknowledged the crucial support from CEJ and hoped for its continuation.

CEJ Programme Coordinator for Climate Change and Energy, Engineer Gabriel Mukuka, explained that the project is focused on Eastern Province due to its severe climate change impacts.

He noted the province's decreasing rainfall, which has significantly affected its role as a major food producer, particularly for maize.

Mr. Mukuka said both Eastern and Southern Provinces, known for their bumper harvests, have been severely impacted by climate change, especially the recent El Niño event.

In response, CEJ and its funders have introduced new techniques and water harvesting systems, such as the "half moon" system, to help farmers utilise limited rainfall more effectively.

Mr. Mukuka pointed out that the province's soil has become acidic due to high agricultural production and excessive fertiliser use.

"The project encourages agroecology practices and organic farming methods to restore soil health and increase production," he said.

Mr. Mukuka noted that during the recent drought, farmers practising organic farming managed to sustain some production, unlike those relying on conventional fertilisers.

"The project aims to discourage synthetic fertilisers and promote traditional, sustainable farming practices," he said.

Issued By: CEJ Communications Unit

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