Sunday, Lufwanyama (10th August 2025)

RESILIENT WOMEN FOR CLIMATE ACTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROJECT LAUNCHED IN LUFWANYAMA DISTRICT

Government has paid tribute to the development sector following the official launch of the "Resilient Women for Climate Action and Environmental Justice" project in Lufwanyama District, Copperbelt Province.

Lufwanyama District Commissioner, Justin Mwalikwa, has since thanked the Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ), Future Prenuers Zambia, Care for Nature, and the cooperating partner, the Carter Foundation, for selecting Lufwanyama as a focal area for this important initiative.

Mr Mwalikwa emphasised that the project aligns with Zambia's strategic vision and government commitment to inclusive, climate-resilient, and people-driven development.

He asserted that the launch was a call to action, amplifying the voices of women and traditional leaders who are among the most affected by environmental degradation and climate change yet have been historically excluded from environmental governance.

The Senior Government Official highlighted women's critical roles in communities, noting that despite their contributions in food production, household management, and resource stewardship, their participation in decision-making remains limited.

Mr Mwalikwa praised the joint endorsement by women and traditional leaders as a symbol of unity and leadership for a sustainable future.

He also pointed out Zambia's growing climate-related challenges such as drought, deforestation, pollution, and the expansion of extractive activities, which disproportionately impact women and vulnerable groups.

The DC reaffirmed the government's full commitment under President Hakainde Hichilema's leadership to address climate change, advance gender equality, and promote sustainable development through national policies and frameworks.

He assured that the district administration would support the project's implementation and called on government departments and partners to collaborate in empowering women environmental rights defenders and community-led sustainability initiatives.

Earlier, Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) Executive Director, Maggie Mapalo Mwape, emphasised the project's symbolic and practical importance in advancing environmental justice, climate resilience, and women's empowerment.

She acknowledged the support from cooperating partners, notably the Carter Foundation, and recognised local government leaders, traditional authorities, civil society, and women environmental defenders as central to the project's success.

Ms Mwape outlined CEJ's mission to promote environmental sustainability, support climate resilience, and empower communities to actively participate in environmental governance rather than remain passive recipients.

She noted CEJ's extensive track record of impactful work across Zambia in areas such as environmental pollution monitoring, climate-smart agriculture, and fostering cooperation between traditional leaders, government, and local communities.

She pointed out that Lufwanyama is a district rich in natural resources but faces significant environmental challenges including water and air pollution, deforestation, biodiversity loss, and the exacerbating effects of climate change.

Ms Mwape stressed the critical need for greater representation of women in environmental governance and the project's role in strengthening women's leadership, advocacy skills, and collaborative networks with local institutions and civil society.

She described the launch meeting as a vital platform for inclusive dialogue, partnership building, and establishing coordinated actions to ensure project sustainability and local ownership.

Ms Mwape urged stakeholders to take ownership of the initiative and committed CEJ to supporting women leaders in securing their rightful place in decision-making.

At the same function, Chief Lumpuma of the Lamba people, through his representative Mr Chomba, expressed strong support for the project.

He described the land of Lufwanyama as more than just soil, but history, livelihood, and identity.

The chief's representative highlighted the traditional leaders' role as custodians tasked with guiding the community across generations.

He praised the project for empowering women environmental defenders and working hand in hand with traditional leaders, stressing that real change in rural communities happens through partnership, respect for culture, and empowerment of those closest to the land.

He called the launch a day of unity among government officials, traditional leaders, civil society, and community members united around protecting the environment, promoting justice, and elevating women's leadership in climate action.

Chief Lumpuma's representative pledged the full backing of the traditional leadership and encouraged cooperation with transparency and shared purpose for a resilient and just future.

Meanwhile, Environmental Defenders Coordinator Dalitso Mvula explained that the five targeted areas for the "Resilient Women for Climate Action and Environmental Justice" project in Lufwanyama District are Mukumbo, Kapata, Kankonde, Komune, and Chifumba.

She said the project is empowering women environmental defenders to lead climate action.

Ms Mvula described how communities have been affected by water scarcity and environmental degradation, disproportionately impacting women, who often travel long distances for water.

She said the project seeks to address the underrepresentation of women in environmental governance by strengthening their leadership and advocacy skills and fostering collaboration between women, district institutions, and civil society.

Ms Mvula emphasised the creation of dialogue and partnership forums to ensure women's voices are heard and visible in decision making.

She also mentioned the signing of memoranda of understanding to formalise cooperation and enhance coordinated efforts.

And Lufwanyama Town Council Secretary, Lynda Mapara, noted that the project aligns closely with government empowerment programmes, underscoring its complementarity with ongoing development goals and commitments.

Issued By: CEJ Communications Unit

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