



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

## Focus: Fuel

Fuel is vital to any community or country. It drives the machines to bring about increased production in terms of goods and services.

For instance, to move people from one area to another there is need for fuel. In the movement of food stuff from one area to another there is a need for fuel for the vehicles.

In areas of production there is need for fuel to turn machines. For instance, machines in the agriculture sector such as tractors need fuel to move the plough.

Therefore, fuel plays an important role in a country's development, but its continued use has caused a lot of pollution and environment degradation.

Fuel has also caused the loss of biodiversity in instances of oil spillage in water. In order to limit these effects there is a need to look at alternatives.

# The Weekly Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

## Disadvantages of Fossil Fuels

Most of the petroleum fuel that is used in Zambia is imported and this is very expensive for the country. It proves to be expensive for ordinary citizens due to the dependence on it.

The recent hike in petroleum has seen a rise in food stuffs as the cost of moving food supplies from one area to another has become more expensive.

Petroleum has brought with it diseases. For instance, the smoke that is produced during combustion leads to

smoke that is poisonous and if inhaled for long periods of time can lead to asthma or other difficulties in breathing.

Use of crude oil causes pollution and poses environmental hazards -- such as oil spills when oil tankers experience leaks or sink.

Environmentally, the mining of coal results in the destruction of wide areas of land. Mining this fossil fuel is also difficult and may endanger the lives of miners. Coal mining is considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the world.

## Activities for Journalists

Since fossil fuel is not renewable and it will eventually run out, alternative renewable energy needs to be promoted.

Recently there was a workshop in Lusaka at which Professor Samson Tembo, CEO of Inex Investments Ltd, was one of the participants. He says he has developed fuel from plastic waste. This fuel, which he developed, is still being researched to know its applicability -- though he has shown that this plastic fuel can be used to power vehicles and other machines. This innovation brings with it a reduction in plastic waste in the environment.

There has also been the innovation of using sugar molasses for power generation in Mazabuka. Nakambala Sugar Estate is the largest sugar company in the country that supplies its product to every part of Zambia and also exports some sugar to other countries. The company produces a lot of molasses from the sugar cane and this makes it even more feasible for producing electricity.

The Nakambala Sugar Estates now produces its own electricity from the molasses that are left as waste during sugar production. The plant sustains itself with electricity it

generates -- not having to rely wholly on the electricity company.

There have also been calls to conduct research on Jatropha, a plant from which fuel can be extracted. The government is looking at ways to get investors interested so that cheaper fuels can be produced.

One of the ways the government has shown its determination to find alternative fuels is by setting up the Biofuels Association of Zambia.

These fuels being promoted are renewable and also have less gas emissions -- which bring about changes in the weather. Even with these innovations there is still a need to introduce other means that will lead to further lowering of greenhouse gases.

How will alternative sources of fuel help the ordinary citizens and their communities?

What are some of the challenges in developing alternative fuel such as plastic fuel?

### Useful Link

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