



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

## Focus: Floods

Zambia is faced with flooding in urban and rural areas almost every year. The government is dependent on the metrological department to provide as much advance warning as possible about potential flooding in order to put preparations in place.

In the rural areas, flooding often means the destruction of crops and a loss of income for farmers.

The floods in some of the rural areas have brought about food shortages – leading to hunger and sometimes worse.

In urban areas, the flooding creates other risks. When houses are submerged in water it can bring about diseases especially waterborne.

The main reason for the flooding in urban areas is because of poor drainage – leaving the floodwaters no place to go.

# 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

## The Problem: Poor Drainage Systems

The drainage systems in most of the urban areas are not very good. One of the reasons for this is the springing up of unplanned settlements. With people moving from rural areas to urban settings in search of work, illegal settlements are established – with no thought of putting in proper drainage systems. Without proper drainage, the water has no place to go.

Another problem, those areas that do have drainage system often find the pipes are blocked. For instance, in Lusaka, many of the systems are blocked with garbage. This makes the situation even worse in that the water backs up and

floods homes and businesses.

Holland Mulenga, a property consultant, said, "This is more about lack of proper forward planning which takes into consideration the expanding towns. If we had proper planning and a planning authority in the first place, the law should have been enforced to ensure social services were properly provided and these floods wouldn't be as bad as they are now."

There is also poor workmanship by the contractors hired on these jobs. Some do not understand what is needed of them. It is therefore important for the local government to hire qualified contractors that understand the job and it's also important the government have enough city planning staff.

## Activities for Journalists

A proper drainage system is one way that can help mitigate the impact of climate change. With the changing weather patterns in which at times heavy rainfall is experienced, proper drainage carries water to designated places.

In many instances, the Lusaka City Council has tried to clean up drainages that have been blocked with waste. It's a major challenge since many people tend to throw trash and other waste into the storm drains – which blocks them up and triggers flooding.

The Lusaka city market and Soweto market have their drains blocked and these are some of the biggest markets in the city. This creates a health risk as waterborne diseases – particularly from dirty water – can easily wind up on fruits and vegetables.

There has also been the building of houses and other buildings in designated drainage areas. This is as a result of the unplanned expansion of cities. The Government, in conjunction with the Lusaka City Council has demolished some of these buildings constructed in spaces meant for drainages.

The town planning department also has a duty to make sure that each community is ensuring that plots of land that are designated as

drainage areas -- are not being given to people for the building of houses and businesses.

In other instances, some of the drainage systems have collapsed due to poor construction. There is need to contract experienced builders who are able to construct drainage systems that will last.

Interview the local authority on the drainage system problem in your community. What, if anything, is being done in your community to ensure people don't build in drainage areas? Does your community have good storm drains? What could be done to make them better?

Talk to people who have experienced flooding due to poor drainage systems.

Launch a campaign to get people to stop putting trash and other waste into the drainage systems in your community.

### Useful Link

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