



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

Focus: Energy

Zambia has a range of energy sources that include hydropower, coal, forest biomass and renewable sources of energy. In terms of household energy consumption, 95% of energy consumed by households is supplied from forest biomass energy sources, in comparison with 11% supplied by electricity nationwide (IEA 2009). Hydropower generation is currently lower than the demand from the mining industry and increased urban demand. Hydropower generation has been reduced dramatically due to poor rainfall.

Other potential sources of energy including solar, wind, geothermal and nuclear have not been developed in Zambia. The potential for solar energy is very high across the country.

The Weekly for Zambia 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: Increased Charcoal Production as Fuel

Cooking accounts for the highest proportion of energy consumption in Zambia. Charcoal & electricity are dominant sources of cooking energy in urban and rural areas. An estimated 66% of urban residents rely on charcoal for cooking and most people use inefficient cooking stoves. Charcoal production directly contributes to deforestation and forest and land degradation. The charcoal production process is highly inefficient. It only produces 20-25% of the potential energy into wood fuel.

The hydropower generation is expected to be reduced

further in 2016 as noted by the Ministry of Energy. The generation of electricity with hydropower has been affected by poor rainfall in 2015 and again this year. The future outlook for rain is not good either.

The Minister of Energy Honourable Dora Siliya recently announced that the Kariba power generation plant might shut down soon because there's not enough water to generate power.

The situation will likely mean more charcoal production and increased degradation of forest land in Zambia in the coming months.

Solutions: Activities for Journalists

Ask listeners how prepared they are for even more power interruptions in the coming months of 2016.

The Minister of Energy recently cautioned Zambians to start investing in various forms of alternative energy. Charcoal is one of the main sources of energy and expected to increase and lead to more forest loss.

Energy saving stoves have been developed by several dealers in Zambia.

Ask listeners if they have heard of these energy saving stoves.

Some stoves would only need sticks to operate and do not need charcoal and can produce the energy required for household use.

Total Zambia is a seller of petroleum fuel in Zambia and is also a distributor of solar equipment suitable for both rural and urban dwellers in Zambia.

The Muhanya Solar Company also distributes various types of solar equipment that is suitable for both rural and urban use.

The Energy Regulation Authority of Zambia in collaboration with Zambia Electricity Company is also distributing energy saving lightbulbs for urban communities.

Ask listeners if they are aware of these initiatives. The Forest Department is encouraging charcoal producers to get licences and be able to produce charcoal in a more sustainable way.

Ask listeners if they are aware of improved charcoal production and procedures required by the Forest Department.

Invite the Forest Department officers on your radio station to discuss various requirements for charcoal production in Zambia in line with the existing law. How do they plan to enforce the law? Ask how charcoal production can be done in a sustainable way.

Charcoal also provides an opportunity for income generation by rural communities if done in a sustainable way.

The current charcoal production is associated with

deforestation and forest degradation.

Both contribute to increased carbon emissions that cause climate change.

Standing forests are also very important for controlling the levels of carbon dioxide gases in the atmosphere.

Forests also protect water catchment areas that provide water for humans and wildlife.

Community radio stations need to increase awareness in the community about the importance of trees to life.

Increased charcoal production due to increased energy demand threatens the forests of Zambia. Community radio stations can partner with the companies and institutions promoting energy saving technologies for increased awareness in the communities.

The shutdown of Kariba Power Generation in Zambia as announced by the Minister of Energy will mean increased cost of electricity as the country will be importing power and this cost will be passed on to consumers.

Increased charcoal production is expected and most of it is done illegally and in an unsustainable way.

Community radio stations should partner with the Forest Department and sensitise the communities on sustainable charcoal production.

Useful Links

Information about rural electrification authority call Mr Justin Mukosha 097779998

Good source of information: Vincent Ziba, FAO Zambia, Zambia; Email: vinceziba@yahoo.com. Phone: 0966-246-924

Mwape Sichilongo, WWF Conservation Manager. Email: mwapesichilongo@wwfzam.org. Phone: +260 966442540

Information environmental degradation write to Irene Lungu of ZEMA on irlungu@zema.org.zm

Call Senior Forest officer Davies Kadhole on 0976059152