



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

### Focus: Forest and food security

The forest provides many benefits for the well-being of mankind -- that include clean air, a reservoir for water catchment areas and food among other vital benefits.

The forest is a source of biodiversity and as such is linked to people's food security, nutrition and health.

Forest foods increase the nutritional quality of the rural diet and act as a good supplement to agricultural crops during hunger periods. Such times as when we experience severe droughts, floods, pests and disease outbreaks.

Forest foods are mostly used by local communities with very little value added or processing for high value markets. There is, however, an increase in people looking for forest foods because of its nutritional value and as a health source -- and this provides an opportunity to the local communities for business.

## 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

### Problem: Reduced from the Forests

Forest foods have been used for many generations for survival. The increase in human population, poor practices for management of forest resources and increased demand for farm lands have put forest resources under very high pressure and threat.

Women often have to travel very long distances to collect forest resources for daily use -- such as fir wood and other foods which were mainly collected within short distances in the past.

Zambia has a deforestation rate of 250,000 hectares of land per year -- and it's mainly due to human activity. This means a tremendous loss of forest resources and food

sources each year.

Many people depend on the forest for their food, fuel and livelihood.

The loss of biodiversity, habitat and natural resources also affects food production. Honey bees, for instance, help in pollinating our crops, but without pollination crops can't survive.

Notable forest foods, rich in nutritional value in Zambia, are caterpillars, mushrooms, honey, natural fruits and indigenous vegetables.

Forests also provide medicines for rural communities with limited access to conventional medicines.

## Solutions: Activities for Journalists

Find out from your listeners which forest areas in their communities are used for collecting food?

How does the forest help people in time of food shortages?

What kind of food does their forest provide?

Forest are very significant in maintaining the biodiversity that supports crop and livestock agriculture.

Find out what traditional methods have been used to manage forests?

Who in your community is responsible for managing the forest to maintain the benefits for future generations?

What is the role of our traditional leaders in forest management?

What is the role of the forest department in managing forests?

Ask an extension agent how the maintenance of biodiversity link to crop and livestock production for food security.

The clearing of land for agriculture and the removal of trees for fuel and charcoal is very harmful to the local habitat. Are there measures in place in your community to protect existing forests? If not, why?

Shrinking access to wood fuel near home often mean women have to travel long distance looking for wood fuel and that means

there is less time caring for their children. It also means less time to find and prepare food.

What happens to a community when biodiversity and forests are lost?

The Forest Act of 2015 provides for community forest management. Find out from listeners if they have heard of the new forest law of 2015.

They can visit the nearest forest department for more information.

Is the forest law working in your community?

Are there alternative fuel sources for wood fuel and charcoal in your community? If not, what possible alternatives can be made available at a reasonable price?

### Useful Links

Information about farming and the environment: Makweti Sishekanu, National Farmers Union Zambia: +260-211-252-649 or +260-965-098-360. Email: [makwetiskanu@yahoo.com](mailto:makwetiskanu@yahoo.com)

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

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