



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

## Focus: Energy Demand

Zambia's energy sources include: electricity, petroleum, coal, biofuel or biomass and renewable energy. The demand for the most important energy source in the country - electricity has been growing at an average of about 3 percent a year (ZDA 2014) mainly due to the increased economic activities. This includes agriculture, manufacturing and mining sectors, but they only contribute 10% to the total energy demand. Biofuel, such as biogas or biodiesel that is produced from renewable resources is currently in limited quantities in terms of biofuel that is produced.

The government recognizes the need for promoting renewable energy. These include wind and solar, but are not popular to the point of adoption. This means that about 90% of the population depends on wood fuel like charcoal or firewood.

# 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

The rate of deforestation in Zambia stands at 250,000 hectares per year. Charcoal production is identified as one of the drivers of deforestation according to the Forest Department. The production of wood fuel in terms of harvesting and/or collection for firewood and conversion into charcoal will continue to rise in almost all provinces of the country as people struggle to earn a living whilst meeting their daily energy needs. However, in terms of the wood stock resource base, the country is expected to continue to lose much of its forest cover

unless measures are taken to reverse current trends.

The loss of wood land and forests with limited efforts to replenish through reforestation will result in increased chances of desertification.

This will consequently affect both rural and urban populations. The loss of biodiversity will result in a loss of ecosystem services and the ability to withstand climate change impacts. Forests are important for supplying fresh water and clean air required for all forms of life.

## Solutions: Activities for Journalists

Wood fuel shortages in the country and increased demand for charcoal should be seen as an indicator of high deforestation in our areas.

Most local people often see urgent needs such as food, shelter and water as more important than wood fuel.

Ask the listeners how the loss of forests in the areas has been due to electricity shortages and increase demand for charcoal in the cities.

Ask listeners how the loss of forests is contributing to poor water and less rainfall. Ask listeners how they see the role of forests in climate mitigation and adaptation.

Trees play a role of absorbing excess carbon dioxide in the air which causes climate change.

Ask listeners who are involved in charcoal production if they also are involved in tree planting programmes by the government or other agencies.

Ask listeners in the urban areas like Mazabuka and Lusaka if they realize the high demand of charcoal means less forests.

To reduce on trade in wood fuel, there will be a need for strong policy that will promote other income generating ventures within the forest ecosystem and also invigorate agricultural productivity.

Promotion of non-wood forest products (NWFP) is, therefore, key in this regard because of the absolute potential of non-wood forest products to expand the income

base to levels where households can even afford to invest in other energy sources.

Trees in an agroforestry system will also offer another revenue source, whilst improving the fertility of the soil for increased agricultural productivity.

Wood fuel supplies will only be increased or at least maintained at average levels, if we can as a country promote natural regeneration, enrichment planting and plantation forestry in order to supplement the hard pressed and slow growing indigenous forests.

This could be achieved through agroforestry, which can also expand the household income base and food security.

Talk to a forestry official about the benefits of trees to the environment.

Organize a tree planting activity with a local NGO – and invite the community to take part – it offers a good opportunity to make people aware of the benefits of trees and the need to find cleaner alternatives for fuel.

### 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)

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

Mwape Sichilongo, WWF Conservation Manager.  
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