“Zambia’s First Female Forester”

Winnie Musonda
UNDP Assistant Resident Representative – Environment & Climate Change.
Greening Chitambo and Serenje Districts

Chitambo district found in the Central Province of Zambia has very few opportunities for jobs for the community particularly the youth. The livelihoods in the district are dependent on forests for charcoal production, uncontrolled logging, caterpillar and mushroom collection and shifting cultivation or chitemene system of farming. These activities have left tracts of land the chiefdoms deforested and degraded. Wild animals that were seen 50 years ago such as buffalo have all been poached.

This district is part of the miombo ecosystem that needs to be preserved for the future. It is in this regard that UNDP and Global Environmental Facility (GEF) are supporting the community-based regeneration of indigenous forests in Zambia’s Central Province project. In particular, the project will: i) strengthen the technical and institutional ability of foresters and communities in Central Province to plan and implement climate-resilient agro-forestry and assisted natural regeneration in miombo woodlands; ii) establish robust fire-monitoring and management protection plans in all districts in Central Province to maintain regeneration in these woodlands and reduce fire frequency; and iii) replace inefficient charcoal production and wood-saving technologies with efficient systems.

This project has been implemented for over two years, but before embarking on forest conservation, there is need to ensure food security and livelihood programmes. The first step is to establish Village Action Groups (VAGS). Presently, there are thirty VAGS 60% of whom are women, under this project in Chitambo and Serenje District. Each VAG has user groups that have been established for bee-keeping, fish-farming and conservation farming. Chief Kabamba reiterated, that income generation is the only way my people will refrain from charcoal burning.

Myenje VAG on conservation farming has implemented the inter-cropping of maize, legumes and nitrogen-fixing trees such as Faidherbia albida in permanent planting basins. Myenje VAG has 300 members. Each member cultivated 10 Lima which is equal to 2.5 hectares under rotation. Through conservation farming they can save 225 hectares of forest land per year because they are no longer practising shifting cultivation. With conservation farming the small-scale farmers can produce 2-3 tons of maize per hectare unlike when they were practicing shifting farming.

Mr Mpanga the chair for the VAG noted that conservation farming has helped reduce the requirements for fertilizer but, he has not cleared another piece of forest as he used to every year.

The project is also promoting agro-forestry, assisted forestry and natural regeneration through techniques such as zoning, maintenance of fire breaks, early burning, cutting trees at a certain height to promote natural regeneration. The UNDP Country Director Ms. Mandisa Mashologu advocates that this strategy will contribute to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

All the incentives are contributing to sustainable forest management.

“The project through forest management activities has brought new life to Chitambo as most of the area is green.”

Ms. Catharine Kunda – Chitambo District Commissioner (DO)

The project will continue to intensify these activities working closely with Kasanka Trust and Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO) in the communities for the next two years.
Zambia’s Game Changers – “The Youth”

Young people across the world are recognized as ICT natives and the generation that will lead the SDGs forward. Recognising this, Zambia’s National Youth Week 2018 was held under the theme “leveraging opportunities for youth through Information Communication Technology (ICT).” The theme was chosen to highlight the opportunities and potential that ICT has to accelerate socio-economic development, especially in rural and remote areas of the country, and the role of youth to exploit this tool for development and take a proactive role in shaping their future. This is important because Zambia is an extremely youthful country, with an astounding 82% of the population being under the age of 35. This presents a unique opportunity for Zambia to harness the potential of its young people and realise a demographic dividend. To recognize this and highlight the contribution and responsibilities of youth to national development, National Youth Week was held from March 5 March to 12 March 2018.

“Youth Week is an important time in Zambia to focus not only on the needs of the youth but also on their innovations and ideas. It gives youth voice in the national debate. The youth are the SDG generation

Ms. Janet Rogan, UN Resident Coordinator

In line with the theme, a key component of National Youth Week was the launch of the Youth Connekt Initiative, which aims to use ICT and strategic partnerships to unlock the potential of youth and connect them with opportunities. The YouthConnekt Initiative, which was originally launched in 2012 by the Government of Rwanda and UNDP, has proven to be highly successful as it combines elements of skills development, entrepreneurship, access to jobs and finances, and awareness raising on issues related to youth development and promotion of citizenship and civic participation.

During the launch Rwandan High Commissioner to Zambia Monique Mukaruliza disclosed that over 4 million youths have benefitted from the YouthConnekt in that country since inception. She said YouthConnekt started in Rwanda as an empowerment initiative for the youth but has become a beneficial tool for the development of Rwanda as a country and expressed gratitude that Zambia has become a member.

The initiative has also been launched in several other African countries with Zambia being the newest country to come on board. Several stakeholders are expected to be involved in the implementation of the initiative at national, provincial, and district levels, under the leadership of the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Child Development, and with support from UNDP and other partners.

In addition to the launch of YouthConnekt, a youth forum and Young Innovators and Entrepreneur’s Exhibition attracting 1,500 participants from all 10 provinces took place on 9 and 10 March, 2018, with UNDP’s support. This gave an opportunity for young people to showcase their innovations, connect with peers, learn about opportunities and express their views on and participation in national development.

Vice-President Inonge Wina launched the platform which is being rolled out across Africa with the aim to reduce unemployment among youths and promote active citizenship.

Throughout National Youth Week, young people in Zambia were challenged to take hold of the opportunities that are available to them so that they become drivers, and game changers, of development. With Zambia’s implementation of the Seventh National Development Plan picking up speed in 2018, which has taken an inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach, young people are now at the centre of this new model of partnership and are fundamental to its vision, programmes, delivery and feedback about progress.
Broadening Consultations on Political Party Legislative Reform

In February 2018, the Ministry of Justice concluded an extensive process to seek inputs from stakeholders on proposed legislation to regulate the registration and governance of political parties. This marked the successful completion of a national consultative process launched by Hon. Given Lubinda MP, Minister of Justice, on 08 August 2017 and conducted in partnership with the Zambia Law Development Commission. This resulted in presentation of a draft Political Parties Bill and report on the National Consultative Process to the Minister on 22 February 2018, following validation of these documents by stakeholders on 13 February.

At the request of the Ministry of Justice, UNDP extended support to ensure broad-based and inclusive consultations involving political parties, the House of Chiefs, civil society and faith-based organisations and other stakeholders. This represented a continuation of UNDP’s support towards legislative reforms from the constitutional review processes, which led to the Constitution of Zambia Amendment Act No 2. of 2016.

The recent and previous constitutional review processes identified the need to develop an appropriate legal framework to enable the state to extend financial support to political parties and to provide an environment which promoted democracy and the management of political parties in Zambia. This resulted in the introduction of a provision within Article 60 of the 2016 amended Constitution for establishment of legislation that provides for fair competition for political office and enhanced accountability of political parties in order to safeguard fundamental civil and political rights.

The Political Parties Bill was therefore developed to respond to Article 60 of the amended Constitution concerning political parties, and in August 2018 the Ministry of Justice launched the extensive public consultation process to provide stakeholders with a broad platform to provide inputs into this draft legislation. To ensure that the final legislation was consistent with the social-political values of the Zambian people and that it is reflective of their needs, several stakeholder groups took part in the process, including traditional leaders, political parties, civil society organisations (CSOs), Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), government institutions, academia and private individuals.

Participants discussed how to bring into effect the new constitutional provisions within the draft Political Parties Bill, and incorporated within this Bill articles relating to duties and obligations of political parties, registration and regulation of political parties, regulation of political party funding and management of funds, and limits on money to be used for campaigns during elections.

UNDP facilitated the consultations with the political parties and the House of Chiefs which was co-chaired by United Party for National Development (UPND) and Golden Progressive Party (GPP). All participants were cooperative during the sometimes-heated debates managing to arrive at a consensus despite the different views. In areas where views varied, the Zambia Law Development Commission was tasked to undertake desk reviews of other jurisdictions from Africa, Asia, Europe and North America for further consideration. This shows that several contentious issues arising from the 2016 elections are in the process of being addressed in a cooperative manner by the stakeholders.

During the handover ceremony the Minister noted with satisfaction that the political divide among the political parties had been crossed especially on important national matters. He added that this was clear testimony that progress could be made through strong national ownership and adherence to a national rhythm and pledged continuation along similar lines for other important legislation to follow. The co-chairs together with representatives of other opposition political parties alongside the representatives of the ruling party expressed satisfaction with the process and committed to participating in future consultative process organised along the lines of the 2017 Political Parties Bill.
UNDP Staff Profile - Advocate for the Rights of Women and Girls

Born and raised in Lusaka, Zambia, Thabo Mubukwanu is known among her family and close friends as a passionate advocate for the rights of women and girls, or more precisely ‘that one who always talks about gender’. After completing a Bachelor of Arts in Economics at the University of the South in the United States, Thabo was inspired to join the world of social change and is currently in her final year of a Master of Public Administration at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in California. Her favorite pastimes include blogging on social issues, designing clothes, and hiking in natural surroundings.

Thabo joined UNDP Zambia’s Governance and Gender Unit in February 2018 as an M&E Intern. Assigned the role of supporting the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for Zambia’s gender-based violence (GBV) fast track and user-friendly courts, she describes her experience as a great opportunity to apply her passion for gender equality activism, while gaining invaluable knowledge and skills beyond the classroom. She believes that UNDP’s approach to incorporating gender into institutional strengthening is a key step in creating a future in which both men and women can thrive in all spheres of life. “The future is young and female, and as a young Zambian woman, this role represents an exciting opportunity to contribute both of these perspectives towards the advancement of social progress in my country.”

When asked what the highlights of her experience have been, Thabo is quick to point out the warm welcome she received from the Governance and Gender Unit, and the UNDP family as a whole. “I feel like I am truly part of the team here”, she says, noting her engagements in key activities including 2018 International Women’s Day celebration, site inspection visits to the GBV fast track courts as well as various programme planning meetings. She also states that her role has greatly enhanced her understanding of development frameworks, including the importance of multi-sectoral partnerships, institutional strengthening and measuring progress towards access to justice.

Beyond her internship, Thabo looks forward to seeing the fruits of her project on measuring access to justice in the form of improved data insights that can inform a strengthened response to GBV. She also hopes to continue applying her newly acquired knowledge and skills as a warrior for social justice.
On March 8, 2018 Zambia joined the rest of the world in commemorating International Women’s Day, with a strong voice from the UN to break the silence, report GBV cases and ensure access to justice to curb any future incidences of violence against women and girls.

During the third quarter of 2017, the police recorded 5,096 cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV) reported countrywide compared to 4,235 GBV cases recorded during the same period in 2016. A total of 416 child defilement cases were reported countrywide representing 8.2% of the reported cases and all victims were girls compared to 2016 which had 615 cases of Child Defilement with Lusaka Province recording the highest number of defilement cases.

The Government of Zambia has made a commitment to domesticate international protocols regarding girls and women in the country. On this day, women from various organisations and government institutions in Lusaka turned up in large numbers and marched to the Freedom Statue in commemoration of the day. International Women’s Day, which in Zambia is mostly celebrated to reflect on the accomplishments of women towards attaining gender equality and equity was this year celebrated under the theme, “Time is now: Rural and urban activists transforming women’s lives.”

Mrs. Inonge Wina, who is Zambia’s first female vice president, graced the occasion with pronouncements of the various ways in which her administration is working to better the lives of women both in rural and urban areas of Zambia. Her Excellency highlighted that the Zambian government will ensure that all international protocols regarding women and girls are domesticated to promote and uplift the lives of women in the country. She also added that the government will continue to promote women’s participation in governance and the growth of the economy. Furthermore, Her Excellency Ms. Wina called for intensive efforts from all concerned parties and stakeholders towards ending all forms of discrimination and abuse of women and girls in the country.

She encouraged the nation to work with H.E President Edgar Lungu who is the African Union Champion for the campaign against child marriage and the ‘He for She’ campaign to ensure women and girls are protected from any form of gender-based violence and early marriages.

Lusaka Province Minister Hon. Bowman Lusambo highlighted that UNDP Zambia has rendered unwavering support to the government of Zambia through the Ministry of Gender to mainstream gender into the public and private sectors under the Gender Equity Seal Programme.

“Transforming women’s lives will not happen unless we can, ourselves as women, deal with the issues that hold women back and keep women down. Last year I learned a new word in local language. Shipikisha. I think it’s a Bemba word but it’s not one of those confusing Bemba phrases - everyone knows shipikisha: suffering in silence, especially where crimes of gender-based violence are perpetrated in the home.

Janet Rogan, UN Resident Coordinator

In her speech the UN Resident Coordinator reiterated the need for both women and men to report all forms of GBV. Ms. Rogan also added that a woman with the courage to break the silence is also a woman who has a vision that her life should and can be different. She urged women to no longer accept to be abused and deprived of their rights and desist from protecting perpetrators.

Lusaka Province Minister, Hon. Bowman Lusambo and H.E Vice President Inonge Wina.
2018 Women’s Month in Pictures

1. UNDP Programme Associate, Hazel Nasilele encouraging Zambians to stand up for gender equality
2. Representatives from the UNDP Gender Unit in attendance at this year’s International Women’s Day Commemoration
3. UNDP National SDG Philanthropy Coordinator - Maybin Nsupila proudly displays a poster on anti GBV
4. UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Janet Rogan championing the cause of Gender Equality
5. An aerial view of a cross section of UNDP staff on International Women’s Day.
6. Vice President H.E Inonge Wina addressing the gathering commemorating International Women’s Day in Lusaka
7. Common Services support staff calls for “oranging the world to End GBV”
8. UNDP Assistant Resident Representative for Poverty Reduction and SDGs, Ian Milimo championing the cause of Gender Equality (SDGs)

"""For decades, women have been calling for the equality that is their right and today, they are shaking the pillars of patriarchy, they are telling their stories and provoking important and necessary conversations. Everywhere, women are saying “The Time is Now”.

Time for equality and opportunity, respect and equal representation. Time for an end to violence.

António Guterres - UN Secretary-General"""
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