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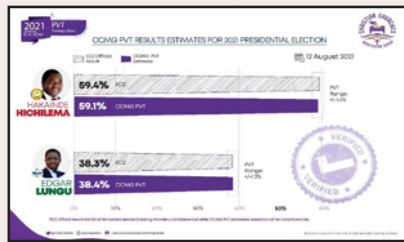
CCMG VERIFIES THE ACCURACY OF THE OFFICIAL 2021 PRESIDENTIAL RESULTS



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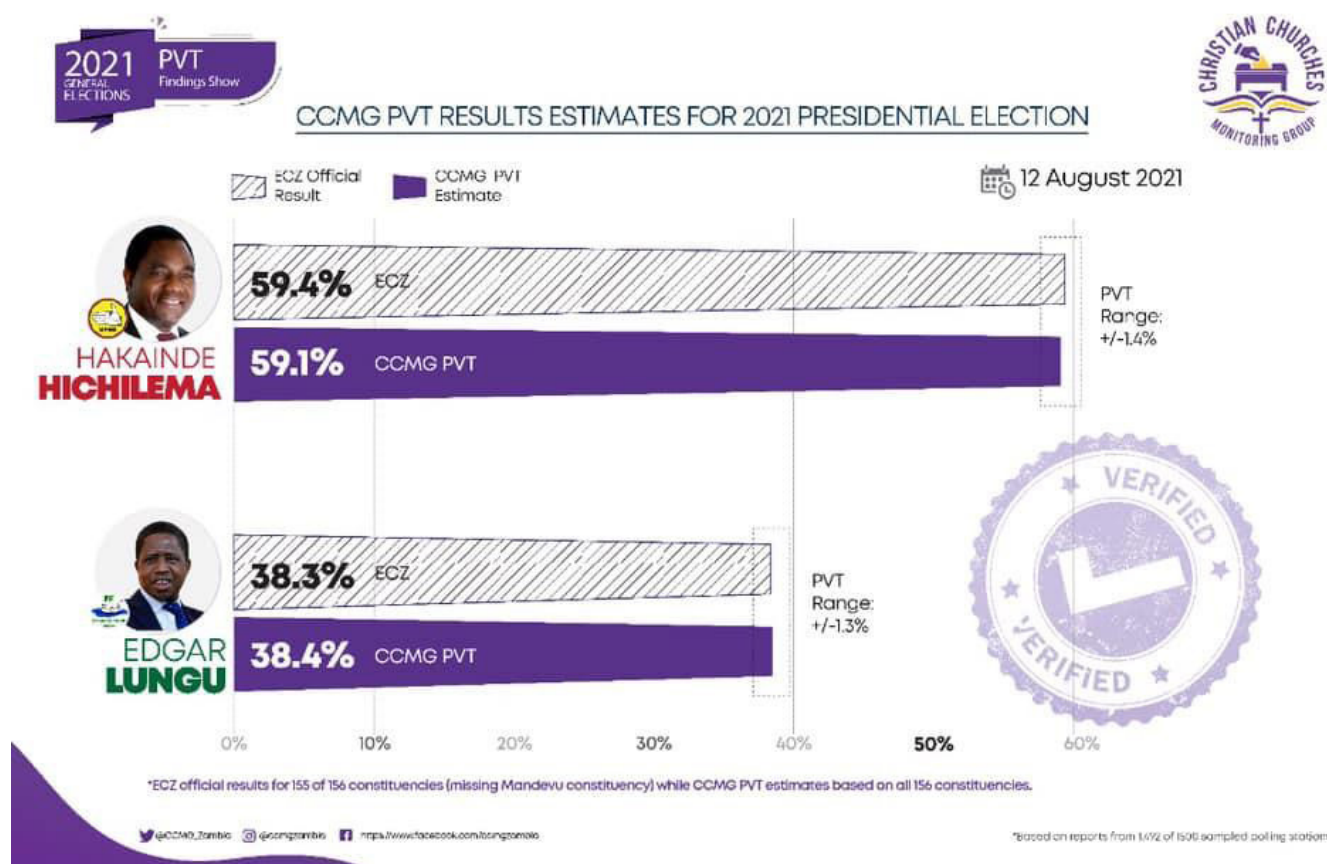
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CCMG VERIFIES THE ACCURACY OF THE OFFICIAL 2021 PRESIDENTIAL RESULTS

The Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG), an independent, non-partisan citizen monitoring network conducted comprehensive monitoring of the 2021 elections.

monitoring, CCMG conducted a parallel vote tabulation (PVT) for the presidential 2021 general elections. CCMG's PVT deployed carefully recruited, highly trained accredited independent non-partisan monitors

registered voters in the sample closely matches the percentage for the entire. Because CCMG's PVT monitors are deployed to a nationally representative random sample, the PVT methodology provides the most



PVTs are used around the world and across Africa to independently determine if official election results reflect the ballots cast.

CCMG deployed over 1,600 monitors and mobile supervisors to every province, district and constituency on Election Day. This enabled it to provide the preliminary findings on the conduct of voting and counting based on their reports from across the country. Reflecting that elections are a process and not just election day, CCMG also shared a summary of pre-election issues, providing a more detailed assessment and evaluation of the pre-election period in its final report.

As part of this comprehensive

to a nationally representative random sample of 1,500 polling stations with 866,689 registered voters of whom 463,625 were female (53.5%)

The PVT sample was carefully constructed according to well-established statistical principles to ensure that it was nationally representative and included polling stations in every province, district and constituency of the country. This was done by stratifying by province, district and constituency to ensure the percentage of polling stations, registered voters and female

accurate information on the conduct of voting and counting and it is the only methodology that can provide independent verification of the accuracy of official election results.

The PVT methodology is impartial and non-partisan and reflects the ballots cast regardless of the outcome of an election. PVTs in Zambia have verified results in past elections both when the ruling party candidate won the election as well as when an opposition party candidate prevailed. PVTs are used around the world and across Africa to independently

Table 1: Comparison of ECZ Official Presidential Results with CCMG PVT Estimates (Leading Presidential Candidates)

Presidential Candidate	ECZ	CCMG PVT		Verified
	Official Result	PVT Estimate	Margin of Error	
Hichilema, Hakainde (UPND)	59.4%	59.1%	+/-1.4%	✓
Lungu, Edgar (PF)	38.3%	38.4%	+/-1.3%	✓
All Other Presidential Candidates	2.3%	2.5%	+/-0.3%	✓

Source: CCMG 2021

CCMG observation effort where undertaken to ensure a credible electoral process for all Zambians, and it is beholden to no candidate nor the ECZ.

determine if official election results reflect the ballots cast. The PVT methodology has been successfully employed by citizen observers for multiple elections in numerous African countries, including: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Ghana and Zimbabwe. PVTs have routinely been conducted for presidential elections in Zambia with PVTs previously conducted in 1991, 2008, 2011, 2015 and 2016.

On the 12th of August 2021, which was election day, CCMG's PVT monitors witnessed and reported on the entire voting and counting process, arriving at 5:30 in the morning and staying at their assigned polling station until counting was completed and results posted. CCMG's PVT estimates are based on the official and publicly available official results from polling stations.

PVTs serve to independently verify official election results by comparing the official result with the PVT's estimated range for each candidate (as well as for rejected candidates and turnout). If the official result falls within the PVT estimated range, then the official result reflects the ballots cast at polling stations. However, if the official result falls outside of the PVT estimated range, then the official result has been manipulated and the PVT suggests the true result. CCMG observation effort where undertaken to ensure a credible electoral process

for all Zambians, and it is beholden to no candidate nor the ECZ.

The PVT estimated range for Hichilema's vote share is 57.7% to 60.5% and his ECZ official result is 59.4%, which falls within the CCMG PVT range. Similarly, for President Lungu, the ECZ official result is 38.4%, which falls within the CCMG PVT estimated range for his vote share of 37.1% to 39.7%. For the two leading candidates as well as for all other candidates combined, the official results announced by the ECZ fell within the PVT estimated range and therefore, CCMG declared with confidence that the official results

reflected the ballots cast at polling stations.

CCMG continues to monitor the electoral process, as it is not complete until all electoral related disputes are heard and resolved. It calls upon the courts, in the interest of ensuring all grievances are heard, to consider all petitions, regardless of whether they have minor technical mistakes or slightly miss filing deadlines. CCMG further called on the courts to be guided by the law in ruling on any petitions and to make their judgments in a timely manner.

<http://t.ly/4ToQ> for official statement. ■





SAVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS IN THE WAKE OF COVID 19

The issues of food insecurity in Chalabesa, like many rural settlements in Zambia, is rife. Communities face difficulties in accessing loans in order to better themselves through entrepreneurship and other economic activities such as boosting their agriculture production capacity. These challenges have only been worsened in the wake of Covid 19.

In 2018, Teresa Chanda Bwalya, like many other community members in Chakulkwa village, in chief Mukwikile of Mpika district, became a participant in the Caritas Zambia food security project, supported by Caritas Norway and implemented through Caritas Zambia's diocesan partner Caritas Mpika. Theresa is married to Patrick kampamba and together have four children, their eldest Shekinah 17, Rachel 14, Veronica 12, and the youngest Shalom 9. Like some of the participants, Teresa was skeptical about the program but once she began to attend the training, she soon realized it was going to be a life-changing journey.

Teresa decided to introduce her entire household to the project and so she would ensure whatever she learned, was passed on to her husband and children. Because Teresa was injured in a road traffic accident which left her hand incapacitated, she and her husband decided to share responsibilities towards the project. Teresa would bring the information and knowledge home and her husband and children would physically implement it within the household.

Theresa and her family are trying to survive through the many challenges that the pandemic has imposed on them. For Teresa however, she is grateful that her household is part of the Zambia food security program which has helped in cushioning the effects that have come with the pandemic, in the community. "Many people are now struggling to keep children in school. Life has



become hard due to the pandemic" she explains. She narrates how the restrictions in movements have cut a lot of people from what used to be their livelihoods and households are now struggling to survive.

Apart from adopting the Sustainable practices she has learned, Teresa also joined the Village internal Savings and Loans (VISLA) group. After joining the group, she has been able to contribute economically to the household income, and the living conditions for her and her family have improved significantly.

Across the region, communities have been hit hard by the sudden and unprecedented spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The impact of all of this is often borne by women and girls who are already held back by gender and economic inequalities. Under the Caritas Zambia Food security program, women and girls have become part of the solutions in building back torn communities due to Covid 19. The introduction of the village savings and loans association (VISLA) under Caritas ZFSP has become part of the solutions to fight poverty in the wake of the pandemic. "Women in rural Zambia face many challenges in terms of trying to survive economically. Challenges of land ownership, high bank lending rates and stereotyping of women in business." Teresa explains. VISLA has been a prayer answered for many women like Teresa.

Caritas Zambia through its diocesan partner, Caritas Mpika is implementing the Zambia Food Security program (ZFSP) whose focus is on sustainable livelihoods. Caritas Zambia realized that access to savings, loans and other sources of credit is a core component to fostering prosperous

and resilient communities. Community members such as Farmers are often faced with financial capital constraints before harvesting their crops and marketing. The inclusion of VSLA in the ZFSP was to establish a savings culture and enhance the financial literacy of rural communities to reduce their vulnerabilities and expand economic opportunities, hence improving their livelihood. Through this many farmers have been financially empowered.

Teresa and Patrick are now able to ensure that their children go to school and build a better life for themselves. "When the project came, my children were struggling to stay in school, partly due to financial challenges, but now with the skills learned we are able to use different avenues for money-making. For example, we now grow our own fish which we sell to both villagers and other cooperate entities nearby", Teresa explains.

Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) play a critical role in bringing financial services to rural areas of developing countries such as Zambia, where access to formal financial services is very limited or almost nonexistent. Although evidence on the impact of these groups have not reached the desired outcome, lives in these communities where Caritas Zambia has focused its interventions are slowly changing and the zeal and determination of the community members spells a brighter future in terms of food security and income. ■

“ EMBRACING RURAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, FARMER SEED AND FOOD SOVERIGNTY ”



Health damaging effects of inadequate or imbalanced diets and chemicals in our food are not confined to a single generation

(Expt 2021 food manifesto)

Agriculture in Zambia plays an important role in the economy and has contributed around 20 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in recent years and about 12 percent of national export earnings. Agriculture employs nearly 70 percent of the labor force and remains the main source of income and employment for most of the

people living in rural areas. Presently, food production systems and the environment are engaged in a mutually damaging relationship. In Zambia Agriculture and food processing systems are degrading the environment through greenhouse gas production, pesticide use, and soil erosion and water depletion as well as energy intensive

production methods. The same systems that put our health at risk also have a devastating impact on environmental health. In a vicious circle, environmental degradation is also reducing the quality of basic nutrients. In addition, the current agricultural policies are not doing enough to prioritise measures that would achieve productivity and reduce poverty especially among rural

populations.

Prior to the COVID 19 pandemic, about 2.3 million people were estimated to be facing severe acute food insecurity (IPC Phases 3 and 4) in the October 2019 March 2020 period, more than double the number in the corresponding period in 2018/19. Although there have been no nationwide assessments since the outbreak of COVID 19, the pandemic is likely to have caused an overall increase in the number of food insecure people and the prevalence of malnutrition. The primary cause of the aggravation to food insecurity is the loss of incomes and livelihoods, as the slowdown in the global economy reduced export demand for Zambian resources and services, while movement restrictions curbed economic activities. The impact is expected to have been particularly acute in urban areas, where job losses have been more prevalent. Based on preliminary results from a rapid urban food security assessment, carried out by the Government and some partner agencies, an estimated 322 000 people are in need of humanitarian assistance in four urban zones.

Since the onset of the Green Revolution, synthetic non-bio-degradable chemicals have been welcomed as simple solutions to complex challenges in mass food production. However, after over a half century of following this approach, we now have overwhelming empirical evidence of associated negative consequences. Chemical fertilisers as well as pesticides and herbicides pollute the waters of rivers, lakes and therefore the sea, damag-

ing an essential food source for many populations of the planet. Chemical pesticides have not only damaged the environment and human health, but have also failed to eliminate pests and weeds from farms. Residues of pesticides are found not only in fruit and vegetables but also in meats, fish and dairy products, due to their bioaccumulation and biomagnification in the food chain. Pesticides are undoubtedly an important risk factor for the onset of cancer both in childhood and in adults and all the main classes of substances (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, pesticides as a whole) proved to be responsible. A number of reviews and meta-analyses found that pesticide exposure increases cancer risk and incidence, including but not limited to kidney cancer, bladder cancer, lung cancer, childhood cancer following parental pre-natal exposure and the most empirically verified.

Health damaging effects of inadequate or imbalanced diets and chemicals in our food are not confined to a single generation. Nutrition provides nourishment that is vital for health and wellbeing at every stage of human life. This linkage commences even prior to conception, with the nutritional status of the adolescent girl who is a prospective mother, and continues later during periods of pregnancy and lactation as a critical determinant of child development. Besides these biological effects, unhealthy diets have intergenerational effects through sociological effects on dietary behaviours. Children who grow up accustomed to

unhealthy diets, are conditioned to continue them in later life. Access is a key pillar of food security and nutrition and features in the formation of obesogenic environments. Access to healthy foods is limited in some urban centres in a phenomenon known as 'food deserts,' mostly in low income or ethnic minority neighbourhoods

We must not forget that food is derived from the seeds and that the primary cause of health problems that afflict the world today is to be sought in the way seeds are produced to be uniform and to respond to chemicals, not for their nutritional density. And because seeds - that later produce the food that has all those effects on our health described already - are produced by the science called genetic improvement, in order to change things we must rethink how breeding is done, and shift from "cultivating uniformity" to "cultivating diversity"

Food and seed regulations run contrary to the imperative of a diet based on biodiversity, organic and local food for a healthy microbiome and nutritious food. Between the need to eat "diverse" foods discussed so far, and the uniformity in food products required by laws on crops, there is a clear contradiction. So too there is an obvious contradiction between uniformity and stability on the one hand and the need for crop adaptation to climate change and local environments on the other. If our health depends on the diversity and diversity of the diet, how can we have a diversified diet if the

agriculture that produces our food is based on uniformity (DUS)? The question for reflection here is that can we keep calm if pesticide residues are within legal limits?

The government has identified agriculture as a priority sector to reduce poverty and enhance household food security. Although Zambia has made some progress in this respect, the evidence shows that despite achieving annual growth rates of more than six per cent in agriculture, crop yields remain low by international standards and rural poverty rates remain stubbornly high at about 80 per cent. The failure of the agricultural sector to provide for livelihoods for the majority people in rural areas is considered a major factor contributing to rural poverty.

Seed sector development would gain attention when seed security and food security are linked together with agricultural economic development in sub-Saharan Africa. In Zambia, the seed industry includes the participation of both the private and public sectors. CSOs acknowledge and appreciate Government's vision to promote diversification in the agriculture sector by promoting, among other measures, the use of improved crop varieties and certified seed. Recognize and appreciate the existence of legislation to further support diversification such as the Plant Breeder's Right Act and Plant Variety and Seed Act No. 21 of 1995 which provides for regulation, control, production,

sale and import of seed as well as testing and for minimum standards of germination and purity. Above all, Government's recognition of the existence of the formal and informal seed sector is appreciated.

However, there is a concern about the limited focus on farmer rights and seed sovereignty. Seed sovereignty includes the farmer's rights to save, breed and exchange seeds, to have access to diverse traditional open pollinated seeds which can be saved, replanted and which are not genetically modified, owned or controlled by emerging seed giants. Seed sovereignty recognises the importance of Farmer Saved Seed Systems (FSSS) which is essential for food security at household level as commercialised seed is mainly accessible to those farmers with some disposable income and is able to purchase them. This creates a gap in boasting food security for most rural households.

Besides displacing and destroying diversity, commercialised seed varieties are also undermining seed sovereignty and farmers rights. Furthermore, the multinational capture of local seed companies is a process that has long been underway in most parts of Africa and is marginalising the local seed companies which in most cases promote the open pollinated seed varieties. Across Africa, new seed laws are being introduced which enforce compulsory registration of seeds with a bias towards Distinct Uniform Stable (DUS) which the traditional seed varieties do not

conform to, thus making it impossible for small scale farmers to grow their own diverse traditional seed as seed but rather grain, and forcing them into dependency on the giant seed corporations which mainly grow hybrid seed which cannot be recycled and depends heavily on synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides not friendly to the environment.

The Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) does not effectively contribute to its intended goal of improving yields and addressing household food and income security by reducing poverty and boosting staple crop production among smallholder farmers. Given that the highest levels of poverty are in the rural communities. However, FISP has been hit by several challenges that have hindered its successful implementation. One of the main challenges includes failure to graduate farmers since the Programme was effected in 2002, there has not been effective monitoring to graduate the beneficiaries. The program is unsustainable in that it requires that the farmers raise money to meet the cooperative requirements, they are unable to participate.

There is therefor need for policy change to consider food systems holistically and support a sustainability transformation to ensure a good future for all and integrated seed system laws rather than outlawing use and sale of traditional varieties and breeds. Public procurements schemes that create a market and demand for organically produced diverse diets rather than highly processed food. ■



COVID-19 IMPACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate Change is of major concern to every country and this continued to affect global economies including Zambia. Zambia for instance is perpetually experiencing floods, droughts throughout the years. This is disrupting food systems, production systems, and other economic activities. The annual average economic losses from climate-related disasters are in the hundreds of billions of dollars. This is not to mention the human impact of geo-physical disasters, which are 91 percent climate-related, and which between 1998 and 2017 killed 1.3 million people, and left 4.4 billion injured. Supporting to climate change (mitigation and adaptation) will directly contribute not only to Goal 13 but also to the other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To mitigate the threat of runaway climate change, the Paris Agreement calls for limiting global warming to 1.5°C. This requires global emissions to peak as soon as possible, with a rapid fall of 45 per cent from 2010 levels by 2030, and to continue to drop off steeply to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The world is way off track in meeting this target at the current level of nationally determined contributions. Global greenhouse gas emissions of developed countries and economies in transition have declined by 6.5 per cent over the period 2000–2018. Meanwhile, the emissions of developing countries

are up by 43.2 percent from 2000 to 2013. The rise is largely attributable to increased industrialization and enhanced economic output measured in terms of GDP.

As of 31 March 2020, 189 parties had ratified the Paris Agreement, and 186 parties (185 countries plus the European Union) had communicated their first nationally determined contributions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat.

In addition, 17 long-term strategies, 18 national adaptation plans, and 2 adaptation communications were submitted by parties. By 2020, parties are expected to update existing nationally determined contributions or communicate new ones, with a view to substantially increasing the ambitiousness of proposed climate action. Positive and Negative impact of COVID-19 on Climate Change

Positive Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has throttled economic activity and disrupted business as usual worldwide, offers an opportunity for countries to reassess priorities and to rebuild their economies to be greener and more resilient to climate change.

Reduced emissions from motor vehicle as more people work from home, use of transport vehicles has reduced significantly. This is

also ensuring reduction on carbon emissions from motor vehicles. The new norm of working from home is encouraged it would contribute significantly to reductions in carbon emissions.

Negative Impacts

The challenges posed by climate change, and the risks connected with the COVID-19 pandemic, are far-reaching and complex. Farmers have lost their markets, supply chains have been disrupted, consumer demand has plummeted, and even food safety monitoring is being interrupted. Climate change and environmental degradation contribute to food insecurity. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates 135 million people face crisis levels of hunger, and another 130 million are on the edge of starvation as a result of the coronavirus.

Climate change, the multiplying effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have come together to push more people into hunger and poverty. For smallholder farmers struggling to feed their families, resilient agriculture and smarter food systems can support nations in preparing, responding and recovering to the multiplying crises that could result in 300,000 people starving every day, cost our economy trillions of dollars, and push millions back into poverty.



Increases in Usage of face masks

and inadequate waste disposal systems. Improper solid waste management has led to substantial negative environmental impacts such as pollution of air, soil and water. It may also result to health and safety problems such as disease spread by insects and rodents via garbage heaps and unsanitary disposal sites. Currently everyone is using face masks disposal of these masks is being done indiscriminately and this further threatens efforts to improve the environment. During COVID-19 pandemic, plastics demand for medical usage has increased considerably in some countries. Besides personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves, a considerable increase in plastic usage has been related to requirements packaging, and single-use items. Collectively, these shifts in hospitals and regular life may exacerbate environmental issues with plastics, which already existed even before the pandemic occurred.



Increased use of Charcoal

As a result of boarder closures and reduced industrial activities, there has been a huge demand on charcoal in Zambia. This necessitated by lockdowns which have forced families to stay home. Consequently, there is a lot of activities at home, cooking, boiling water etc. This translating into more demand for charcoal, because there is inadequate electricity supply in Zambia. And LPG gas has been in constant shortages and very expensive since the COVID-19 Pandemic outbreak. The unprecedented demand for charcoal will result into deforestation.

Loss of Fiscal and Policy Space

Zambian government in response to the COVID-19 has adopted measures and polices to try to contain, avert the spread and also manage the impact. These measures include restrictions on social gathering, movements, promotion of social distance and wearing face masks, restriction and closures of certain economic activities.

These measures are resulting into closures of businesses and job losses and an economic slowdown. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected that the Zambian economy will experience negative growth this year, shrinking by at least 2.6% (Ng'andu 2020). The last time Zambia registered negative GDP growth was over 20 years ago (IMF 2004). The Zambian government is also forecasting a revenue shortfall of 19.7% in 2020 (Ng'andu, 2020). Government may reduce or abandon efforts/resources towards climate

change and focus on social sectors such as health, education, water and sanitation.

Support for implementing the SDGs has been steady but fragile, with major and persistent challenges. Financial resources remain scarce, trade tensions have been increasing, and crucial data are still lacking. The COVID-19 pandemic is now threatening past achievements, with trade, foreign direct investment and remittances all projected to decline. The pandemic also appears to be accelerating existing trends of global value chain decoupling. One of the few bright spots at this time is the increased use of technology as people flock to the Internet to work, shop and connect with others, but even this draws attention to a still-enormous digital divide.

Global merchandise trade is projected to decline by 13 to 32 per cent in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Trade-weighted tariffs decreased from 2.2 per cent in 2017 to an average of 2.1 per cent worldwide in 2018. The preferential tariffs offered by World Trade Organization members providing unilateral concessions of preferences have reached an average low level of 1.1 per cent for both developing countries and LDCs. Difficulties in complying with conditions for preferential treatment – and the increasing number of trade agreements among developed countries – may narrow the window of opportunity that these rates offer to developing country exporters. *(For more get a copy of the policy brief on the Caritas Zamia website = www.caritazambia.org) or direct link:*



AN AFRICA FIT FOR CHILDREN

“ Caritas Zambia and other stakeholders had an opportunity to collect Children's views that can be considered and incorporated in the national development agendas such as the National Development Plan or National Budgets ”

16 June, the African Union and its Member States observe the Day of the African Child (DAC) as a commemoration of the 16th June 1976 student uprising in Soweto, South Africa, where students who marched in protest against apartheid-inspired education, were brutally murdered. The courage, determination, and sacrifice of the African children demonstrated on 16th June 1976 stands as a symbol to be remembered in the African History and hence on 16th June every year, Africa celebrates the bravery, pride, and leadership of the African Children to defend their rights on the day known as “The Day of the African Child”. To show the commitment to children, the African Union adopted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (ACRWC) in which the aspirations for the African child have been enshrined.

Forty five years ago, today, the day is still celebrated. Although it is not every African country where children are physically murdered, African children across the continent continue to face some form of “murder” through the various forms of harm that they are subjected to. Abuses that kill both the dreams and future of the African child.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia through the Ministry of Youth Sport and Child Development in partnership with Joining Forces International Organizations and the Local Civil Society Organizations organised for 16 Days of Children's Rights Campaign between 1st – 16th June 2021 which include conducting Provincial Children's Symposium under the theme of “30 years after the adoption of the charter; Accelerate implementation of agenda

Caritas Zambia, through its Child Protection project undertakes interventions that celebrate the children of Africa, Zambia to be specific and calls for serious analysis and commitment towards addressing the many challenges they face in Africa as a whole, but more so here in Zambia. The day of the African Child 2021, commemorated under the theme: **“30 years after the adoption of the Charter: accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2040 for an Africa fit for children”**.

The government of Zambia in its bid to strengthen the network of organizations working with children in Zambia, lined up a national commemoration, under the theme, **An Africa Fit for Children**. Since then a number of activities took place and among them were a series of

provincial DAC commemoration where different partners under the Save the Children Supported Sida CSO Project and other organisations took the lead in the provincial commemoration and Caritas Zambia in collaboration with MYSCD took the lead in the provincial commemoration in western province where children from Nkeyema district under Caritas Zambia's Child protection programme, participated in radio programmes held at Radio Liseli, a local radio station in Mongu district of the southern province of Zambia.

During the radio programme, the children were able to highlight some of the key challenges they still faced in relation to the 2021 DAC theme and also around their education and these include; through its child protection programme, Caritas Zambia held radio talk shows

During the radio programme, the children were able to highlight some of the key challenges they still faced in relation to the 2021 DAC theme and also around their education and these include;

- ◆ Challenges around the dilapidated school infrastructure
- ◆ Long distances being covered between schools which discouraged most [parents to enrol their children at the right



age 0 hence most of the children especially girls end up being married.

- ◆ Lack of teachers especially for science and math teachers
- ◆ Lack of libraries in most rural schools which becomes a huge challenge especially in areas where children are not able to access technology like smart phones or laptops to do their research.
- ◆ Limited to no laboratories in some schools which becomes challenging for children in science classes to do their experiments especially during examination.
- ◆ Technological challenges – lack of computers in most schools in the rural parts of Western province which becomes a big challenge as most children only get to see a computers during exam time and mostly fail to operate the computers.
- ◆ Limited number of teachers in most schools in western province where some schools only have about 3 teachers running the whole which prompts teachers to combine classes – for instance grade 2 and 3 and this compromises the quality of learning.
- ◆ High levels of poverty (financial constraints) where parents/ guardians are not able to pay user fees for their children/ learners – the children appealed to government to go round western province and map out such families and consider putting them on schemes like the Social Cash Transfer Programmes.



Through this platform, caritas Zambia and other stakeholders had an opportunity to collect Children's views that can be considered and incorporated in the national development agendas such as the National Development Plan or National Budgets. It also gave the children a chance to voice out on what they really want and how they envision their future, tomorrow the gap between their aspirations with the flimsy idea duty bearer have. An Africa fit for children must be achieved and it must start now. For Caritas and many like-minded stakeholders, it is attainable if we let the children set the pace by allowing their voices to be heard. ■

EQUIPPING THE MEDIA IN CHAMPIONING FARMERS' RIGHTS, CLIMATE JUSTICE, SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND AGROECOLOGY



Policy and incentives must be based on recognition of the integrated management of natural resources while an agro ecological approach required an understanding of the multi-functional nature of agriculture. In recommending an agro ecological approach as an important part of future agricultural policy, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) 2008 reported on the interconnectedness of agriculture's different roles and functions. African Heads of State agreed in 2011 that support for Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) be based on scientific evidence, and that resources should be found to establish EOA as a central part of policy for sustainable development.

Scaling up required a change from policies which handed out inputs, to policies which encouraged independent production using locally available resources.

Additionally, scaling up to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals will require systemic interventions and changes designed to bring about long-term change based on an understanding of the levers of change such as transforming systems which currently perpetuate a "problem" to them perpetuating a "solution and this calls for concerted efforts from

all stakeholders. It is against this background that Caritas Zambia in partnership with other like-minded organisation held a media workshop, an annual media training that is second time running.

This engagement is meant to equip the media with knowledge in the thematic areas for Caritas Zambia and its cooperating partners, FIAN International Zambia, Action Aid Zambia and PELUM Zambia for increased awareness and dissemination to the various target audiences.

An African Ecological Organic Agriculture policy needs to be coherent with other economy-wide policies to create an overall enabling environment conducive to achieving multiple goals.

Policies need to target country-specific constraints to development and place greater emphasis on enabling well-functioning markets and innovation systems, and on investing more in people and infrastructure.

The 2021 Media Engagement stems from an initiative by Civil Society Organizations (CSO) championing Farmers' Rights, Climate Justice, Social Accountability and Agro ecology. Birthed in 2019 as an annual event, the engagement is meant to equip the media in order to set an agenda on Farmers' Rights, Climate Justice, Social Accountability and Agro ecology.

The two-day meeting attracted 25 participants drawn from electronic, print and social media institutions from Lusaka, Mongu, Kabwe, Choma and Lundazi. Agriculture, environment, climate change and people's livelihoods were major discussions at national and global level.

The revision of the National Agriculture policy, the 7th National Development plan, the Land Policy as well as the National Biosafety Act was evident of their importance.

The Covid-19 pandemic had exposed the need for safe environments with food grown naturally to support soil, plant, and human health.

Globally, discussions around agriculture and food systems had intensified with a United Nations Food Systems summit scheduled for September underway. The summit aimed at strategizing on how the food systems could foster positive change in the agriculture sector as well as aid in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals will be held in Europe.

The role of the media therefore is to create awareness on the need for sustainable agriculture practices and need for healthy food systems that contributed to the health of the soil, plants and human beings. The presentation highlighted that sustainability was the ability to meet

the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs adding that the goal of sustainable agriculture was to meet society's food and nutrition needs in the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

For agriculture to be considered sustainable it should be economically viable, socially acceptable, and ecologically sound. Conventional agriculture practices such as use of chemical fertilizers, unsustainable clearing of land for unsustainable agriculture use, careless bush burning, use of herbicides and monocropping practiced contributed to high rates of soil degradation due to soil erosion and nutrient leaching. This has led to loss of biodiversity in both flora and fauna leading to reduced soil productivity, poor diets, food insecurity and malnutrition.

Unsustainable farming practices lead to soil infertility, erratic rain, and increased input required for the same piece of land as well as reduced profit. The impact could be reduced if agro ecology, a more sustainable, appropriate farming approach is used. Agro ecology requires low external inputs and centres on food production that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems, and people to benefit the shared environment and a good quality of life for all involved in the ecosystem.

It encourages the use of sustainable organic agriculture practices such as the use of organic matter to improve the soil nutrient level through use of compost, organic fertilizers where available (Animal manure, dairy slurry, crop residues), leaf and manure teas mostly from legumes, green manure and crop rotations (Mucuna, Sunhemp (*Crotalaria* spp), Dolichos, agro-forestry technologies e.g., *Faidherbia albida*, *Leucaena*, *Sesbania* and intercropping e.g Maize intercropped with pigeon peas.

Further highlights of the presentations were that Farmers Rights are defined as 'the rights that peasants and indigenous peoples have over seeds including, rights to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved, protect their indigenous knowledge, protect farmers' land and livelihoods, participate in decision making on issues related to crop genetic resources and to be recognized, rewarded and supported for the contribution to the global pool of genetic resources.

Farmers' rights apply to all those farmers who contribute to the conservation, sustainable use and further development of agricultural biodiversity while those who buy industrial/commercial seed every year are not concerned by these rights. These rights preserve diversity of seed varieties, allow farmers to freely buy, exchange, save and replant seed, embrace agro ecology which cares for the environment as well as promote household food and nutritional security.

However, farmers' rights have not been actualized and realized by farmers. They are not aware of the importance of their rights. They are also not aware of the corporate control of seed systems by multinational corporations, genetic erosion and loss of agricultural biodiversity, their increased dependency on multinational corporations for seed supply and increased monopolization of the formal seed supply systems.

In addition, the Farmer Input support program (FISP) promotes chemical fertilizer use and disregards indigenous knowledge of agro ecology, promotes conventional seed varieties bred by multinational corporations and causes loss of biodiversity as it encourages monocropping. Small-scale farmers are pushed away from seed breeding and forced to become consumers of non-renewable, patented seed sold by industries, who are increasingly monopolizing the seed system.

Some of the effects of farmers not realizing their rights include loss of indigenous seed and increased use of and dependency on conventional seed inability of farmers to earn reasonable income due to hikes in seed and fertilizer prices, land is degraded due to high use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and high poverty levels.

The presentation highlighted that the rights-based approach to social accountability is founded on the basic premise that all human beings have equal dignity & equal claim on the resources required to meet their basic human needs and to experience their fundamental rights as capabilities. Human life is basically an ongoing endeavor to meet a range of needs that enable a human being to survive, to function, and ultimately to realize one's potential. Poverty is a shortage of something necessary or required hence human needs are very connected to the idea of lack or poverty

A socially just society is one in which basic human needs are guaranteed (by law) and are met at least to a basic minimally acceptable standard for all members of that society. Social accountability initiatives are a product of a combination of motivating factors, the three main being increased development effectiveness, improved governance as well as empowerment.

Accountability of public officials is the cornerstone of a good government and a prerequisite for effective democracy. It leads to improved development outcomes through improved public service delivery and through a more responsive, sensitive, and informed policy design. Increased accountability, eventually resulting in improved governance and development effectiveness, has implications for empowerment of the people, especially the poor and marginalised sections of society. One key concern of social accountability mechanisms is the budget.

Democratic accountability entails holding of political representatives to account for their performance in office. It is about voting and being able to vote and happens through citizens giving individuals and or political party's authority to govern and requires a constitution and laws that gives citizens the right to elect representatives. Social accountability refers to the broad range of actions and mechanisms beyond voting that citizen can use to hold the state to account, actions on the part of government, civil society, media and other societal actors that promote or facilitate these efforts and emphasizes political and socioeconomic rights of citizens as well as focuses on the relationship between the demand and supply side.

The reality is that decades of using these farming methods have never yielded poverty reduction and food sovereignty. On the centrally, there has been an increase in the levels of malnutrition among households and indication that industrial agriculture has failed. We therefore need to create awareness on the need to adopt agro ecological farming practices to address this. The media has a critical role in ensuring that this information is taken to the policy makers as well as the farmers. The media should take keen interest in developing stories from the agriculture sector as there are a lot of issues that need to be interrogated. ■



FROM THE FARMER TO THE FARMER – Caritas Kumena Exchange Visit

Exchange visits seek to improve the knowledge and practices of farmer from farmers and to integrate the experience gained from the visit into their daily livelihood.

Caritas Zambia organised exchange visits that involved meeting between, on the one hand, a group of farmers both men and women, and, on the other hand, a host group of farmers. The aim was to exchange experiences and discover new viewpoints and approaches for the various interventions under the Caritas Zambia Livelihoods programme.

Exchange visits have been tried and tested among both illiterate and more literate farming communities and are useful tool for learning and networking as it presents the values, principles and standards of peer-to-peer learning and sharing that can be enhanced through further exchange. Beyond just acquiring information, physical interaction between Kumena and the Zambia food security program (ZFSP) created a common understanding and relationships through shared experiences. The aim of the farmer exchange visit was

to allow the farmers from these two projects an opportunity to exchange knowledge on Sustainable Organic Agriculture and good practices and share successes on the village internal savings and lending groups. During the farmer exchange visit, the farmers from Central province showed the farmers from the northern and Luapula province their thriving Community interventions, implemented from the various practices learnt from Caritas Zambia.

The two projects had an opportunity to make further commitments to their interventions as participants. Adding on what the Zambia food security project participants were already implementing, the farmers were introduced to new approaches to the already existing farming methods. The farmers took time to learn in-depth through the ideas shared by Kumena and carefully assessing the relevance of everything shared and how workable it is to their various locations in terms of geographical location, weather patterns, weighing in on both external and internal factors.

Although the two projects participants have received intensive training and empowerment from Caritas Zambia, through the implementing diocesan partners Kabwe, Mpika, Mansa and Kasama, the exchange visit brought this information alive through sharing of ideas, personal stories and responding to specific areas they felt had lapses or successes. The discussions and debates ensued due to the perspective of distance and difference in implementation of the various practices learnt, gave both parties an opportunity to appreciate their common problems and achievements. This gave them the zeal to keep working and launch new initiatives.

The ZFSP took village tours in the target areas of Likumbi, Liteta and Kizito, that gave them an opportunity to envision their planning, should they host future exchange visits as tools for learning and networking. These experiences will provide them with access to knowledge and information, which will gradually give them greater empowerment. ■



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