



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

## Focus: Water Harvesting

Water is one of the most precious natural resources. Water, in some parts of the world, is often considered an everlasting free source.

The demand for water supply is growing higher due to increasing population size – underscoring the need for the sustainable use of water – in order to balance demand and supply.

In Zambia, there are growing water shortages. In fact, water supplies remain a challenge and the situation has been attributed to the drop in the rainfall during the 2014/2015 season. It has led to low levels in the reservoirs – including Lake Kariba – which is used for hydro-electric power.

Water harvesting is the collection of runoff for productive purposes

# 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: Poor Water Harvesting

Ground water is mostly considered an open access resource and that anyone can pump water under his or her own land.

Unsustainable harvesting of water is mainly due to high water use by farmers, construction industries, mining industries and the growing population.

Livelihoods are generally good during strong rainfall years. However, during prolonged dry spells – there are crop failures, less food for people, livestock and wildlife.

This places greater demand on underground water.

However, the underground water tables have been significantly reduced and cannot meet the increasing demand for water.

The water utility companies have announced that water supplies will be erratic in October and November. Electric power, too has been reduce, too, by more than half due to limited water.

In addition, poor irrigation methods have contributed to the drying up of water reservoirs as reported in Mkushi farming area.

Harvesting water is one way to combat this problem.

## Solutions: Activities for Journalists

The unsustainable use of water may create a more erratic water supply.

Find out from listeners if they conserve water. If so, how? If not, why not?

Ask the listeners to identify their main sources of water.

What are their water needs? Do they have livestock, crops that need to be irrigated?

Ask listeners if they know of any water catchment areas in their areas. Do any of your listeners collect rainwater? If so, what have been their experiences? Has it helped them to get through dry spells?

The rainy season begins in November, ask listeners if they can begin to harvest run off water for future use.

The water management authority is creating community water management committees.

Ask listeners if they know about the water management authority.

Small-scale irrigation techniques are promoted by International Development Enterprises. These techniques are designed to help conserve water and provide for efficient water use.

Conservation Farming Unity is promoting making pot holes for growing crops. These holes are made before the first rains.

They are used as a backup supply of water when there are dry periods.

Conservation Farming Unity has

demonstrated that that farmers with potholes, harvest better crops during drought years.

Ask listeners if they have tried to plan crops in potholes promoted by Conservation Farming Unity of the Zambia National Farmers Union.

The holes need to be made now before the rainy season begins.

Farmers in drought-prone areas such as the Southern province and parts of the Eastern and Western provinces need to practice potholing.

Protection of water catchment areas need to be encouraged. Ask listeners what traditional practices are used to protect catchment areas.

Water is life and farmers need to understand management practices – and be prepared in times of dry spells and drought.

### 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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