

## **Press Release 04-06-09.**

Civil Society For Poverty Reduction - CSPR, GTZ and in conjunction with NGOCC has recently finished up a tour to all the 7 districts of northwestern province. The following are the brief observations made during this tour;

The general findings through out all the districts visited was that the CEEC funds have not trickled down to the ordinary citizens in these districts despite their submissions of up to date project proposals that had been reviewed by the district steering committee of the CEEC in each district. As CSPR NWPPMT, we wish to appeal to the government to expediate the process and ensure that the money reaches the furthest district so that the livelihoods of the people are improved. So far it is sad to note that no project under CEEC was being implemented in the districts other than the few proposals approved in Solwezi district.

As CSPR NWPPMT we also wish to express our worry with the low pace the APRM (African Peer Review Mechanism) process is being conducted through out all the districts visited. At the time of the district tour only districts such as Kabompo and Mufumbwe indicated that they had someone coming in to their districts to organize for focused group discussions. The pace at which the process is going, especially that the review of this process for Zambia will be conducted sometime later in the year leaves much to be desired. Most CSO's interviewed in the districts expressed total ignorance on the APRM process.

As CSPR NWPPMT we wish to express our disappointment at the state of most schools in the province. Most schools are situated very far apart such that pupils have to cover long distances to get there. The situation is made even more difficulty when the infrastructure of the schools cannot support the learning process; most of them lack dormitories, libraries, laboratories and most importantly electricity. There is a high rate of girls dropping out of school and some of the reasons, came as a result of the learning environment that they are subjected to. For instance, in Chavuma there is no boarding school in the whole district and pupils have to walk long distances to get to the only two high schools in the district. Most girls cannot afford to walk to and from schools; hence they end up renting for accommodation making them very vulnerable. CSPR NWPPMT wishes to appeal to government through the ministry of education to establish more tertiary institutions in the province to cover for far away districts like Chavuma and Zambezi.

The poor health system is very much alarming across all the districts visited. Districts like Mwinilunga are lacking adequate medicines as well as staff to manage hospitals. In other districts like Chavuma which is the newest district in the province and the second poorest district in the country have no hospitals, let alone a Good Health Clinic. Patients still have to travel to Zambezi which is 83 KM away for treatment. In Mufumbwe the district hospital is still under construction and only a health clinic is available. Women met there complained bitterly of high deaths of especially expecting mothers due to lack of appropriate health facilities. However all references are made to Mukinge general hospital in Kasempa district. The distance is disadvantaging the less privileged as they cannot access health care due to financial limitations.

CSPR through the NWPPMT would like to call for a speedy electrification of the rest of the district in the northwestern province except for Kasempa and Solwezi which are already connected to the national grid. Electricity entails increased efficiency in productivity. Boarding schools without electricity cannot maximize studying hours of the night, investors cannot set up companies as the cost of production will be too high, Hospitals cannot function efficiently and effectively. CSPRs calls for a quick electrification process that will open up the districts to the other developmental opportunities.

CSPR through its NWPPMT also wishes to commend government on its prioritization of agriculture. However, we also wish to encourage government to increase allocation of agriculture requirements to the district. Certain agriculture departments in the districts like Zambezi for instance lack transportation as well as storage facilities for agriculture inputs being harvested. Government should take the centre stage of ensuring that apart from the food packs that the government is sending, all other necessary logistics must be put in place to ensure that agricultural personnel deliver to their fullest potential.

CSPR through the NWPPMT would like to take note of the improved communication in the province through the establishment of the high quality fully flagged international standards radio stations in both Mwinilunga and Kasempa. These stations will provide opportunity for increased awareness on developmental issues among the locals. Especially that print media is none existent in some districts as they get papers even after a week. Chavuma however has no single Zamtel Telephone line.

CSPR through the NWPPMT would like to take note also of the slow progress on the road works in the province. The T5 stretch from Chingola through to Solwezi and finally Mwinilunga lives much to be desired. The M8 is another long story told over and over again. The works on that road have lagged over the years. This has disadvantaged the furthest district Chavuma from development.

CSPR would like to call on government to speed up the establishment of the oil industry in Chavuma, Kabombo and Zambezi where Oil deposits have been discovered in order for the prices of petroleum products to get down for the benefit of the common citizen. The local leadership in Chavuma have called on government to involve the local people and royal establishment in the Ministers committee that is looking at the extraction of the oil in their area, if meaningful support from the locals is to be archived and that atleast 10% of the proceeds of the industry must be ploughed back to the developing of the districts.

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