

# EU urges putting on hold mining works in Lower Zambezi

By Fanny Kalonda

NOW is the right time to act and put on hold the preparatory works for mining operations within Lower Zambezi National Park, European union delegation representative Mathias Reusing has told government.

Launching the Zambia Agroforestry, Biodiversity and Climate ZAABC project, Reusing said Lower Zambezi National Park plays a critical role in the geographical context of the ZAABC project.

He said the EU remains committed to uplifting the lives of the Zambian people.

"The European Union and its member states, as Team Europe, remain committed to uplifting the lives of the Zambian people through deliberate climate-relevant projects that will see the country achieve its NDCs (naturally determined contributions) to cut down carbon emissions. Climate-relevant strategies contribute to the sustainable transformation of agriculture and food systems in low and middle-income countries," said Reusing. "Now is the right time to act and put on hold the preparatory works for the mining operations within the national park."

The Ministry of Green Economy and Environment and the European Union (EU) on Tuesday jointly launched the Zambia for Agroforestry, Biodiversity and Climate (ZAABC) project, which the EU funds with 4.15 million euros.

Geographically, the ZAABC targets the Lower

Zambezi-Luangwa-Nyika (ZLN) landscape and supports the integrated transformation of selected agriculture, forestry, and wildlife-based value chains (VCs) in the ZLN corridor to become more sustainable, climate-resilient, and productive whilst supporting local livelihoods, food security, resilient food systems and protecting biodiversity.

The project will have an outreach of at least 50,000 smallholder farmers and community members. Furthermore, the action will introduce climate-relevant management practices on 40,000 hectares of agricultural and pastoral ecosystems. In addition, the ZAABC project would co-sponsor community-based initiatives for scaling up viable value chains through small grants.

Green economy permanent secretary John Msimako said the project was yet another milestone in the existing cordial relationship between the Zambian government and the EU.

Msimako noted that the project would help prevent deforestation, land and forest degradation, through mitigation and adaptive approaches.

"Today, this unwavering partnership has culminated in a four year Agroforestry, Biodiversity and Climate project. This project which is at a cost of 4.1 million euros will support sustainable value chains in the lower Zambezi, Luangwa, and Nyika corridor in order to improve the livelihoods of many Zambians," he said. "The project will also help prevent deforestation, land and forest degradation through mitigation and adaptive approaches thus contribute to our nationally

determined contributions as a pledge to the Paris Agreement. Government is delighted to see the ZAABC project begin to be implemented as it is a move that compliments the efforts that promote development of climate-relevant, productive and sustainable food systems."

Msimako said the government is committed to collaborate with the private sector in creating an enabling policy framework for a conducive environment for Zambians in the project sites.

He said communities where the project would be implemented should seize "this opportunity to earn meaningful livelihood".

Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) country coordinator Maimbo Malesu noted that urgent climate adaptation and mitigation measures would provide smallholder farmers and rural entrepreneurs an opportunity to secure a livelihood against threats of climate change.

"We cannot wait any longer. Engaging our rural communities in climate-relevant and sustainable practices is crucial as it will give many households the necessary techniques to survive amidst the harsh impacts of climate change," said Malesu. "Our current efforts must take a multisectoral approach to support climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and food and nutrition security for our local farmers. The responsibility to adapt and mitigate climate lies on all of us."

think the ev  
will get bet  
coming year  
the econom  
important p  
Zambians v  
government  
followed by  
ture/roads,  
agriculture.  
Very few Z  
new down  
performing  
"very well"  
stable (20 p  
ing roads a  
cent), narro  
(33 per cen  
and sanitati  
cent), and t  
health serv  
About half  
citizens are  
the governm  
the econom  
are satisfied  
against cor  
and crime (1  
Citizens gr  
high marks  
educational  
and creativi  
cent)."