USAID Notes from the Community-based Forest-management Program
Stakeholder Meeting

March 27th, 2013 – Nyimba, Nyimba District, Eastern Province

USAID Presentation on the Community-based Forest-management Program:

“The Community-based Forest-management Program is a large-scale REDD+ program of $14 million over five years. As it takes a lot of capital in the first few years of a REDD+ program before it can begin the verification process, this funding will act as the initiation of a long-term relationship between an implementer and the selected communities. This process of verification takes approximately 24 months on private lands and could potentially take longer on public lands. This is the reason for giving additional buffer time and funding this program for five years to ensure the completion of the verification process. This program will occur mainly in the Eastern Province with the potential for spill over into Muchinga Province. We are allowing for this spill over as some areas are more valuable than others depending on a forest’s level of threat from the drivers of deforestation. There is potential for forests on the borders of Muchinga and Eastern Province to have higher REDD+ payout from carbon credits and therefore be more profitable for the communities, the implementer, and the government. USAID is asking for this to be a long-term relationship with communities, government experts, and civil society. We are not talking about five to ten years; we want to start a relationship that will last for decades that brings benefits to communities that protect their forests.

In terms of outcomes, first off, USAID would like to see more joint forest management. Stakeholders should include communities, district and provincial governments, the forestry department, ZAWA, the Lands Department, the implementer, and traditional authorities. This entails coming up with a plan among the different stakeholders to figure out how best to protect, manage, and benefit from these forests. Not only does it take planning, but it takes enforcement. Within a plan, each entity must have a reason to be a part of an agreement and play their role accordingly. After accounting for planning and enforcement, then comes benefit sharing. What is benefit sharing? We all think about money in the background so let’s just say it: it is revenue sharing; it is producing income from your forests while keeping your forests there so that communities don’t have to cut down the trees to generate revenue.

In terms of revenue generation, there are at least two foreseeable paths that would be taken simultaneously. One is through livelihoods. Bringing in and improving upon non-timber forest activities such as mushroom and caterpillar gatherings, beekeeping, and small animal husbandry under the forest canopy. There are also potentially new technologies out there that will bring about new sources of income. The livelihood activities will focus on women and youth, not excluding men, simply ensuring that there are opportunities for women and youth to benefit from these activities as well.

The second path entails generating income through conservation and the sale of carbon credits. The income generated from outside sources through carbon credits would create jobs, such as forest guards. Such jobs would allow charcoalers to change their livelihoods into more sustainable activities that
protect forests instead of degrading them. This will help stimulate communities on the outskirts of forests and provide new employment opportunities.

Another outcome is to generate a legal precedent for large-scale REDD+ in Zamia through designating REDD+ viable zones with an implementer, gaining a long-term guarantee from the government, traditional authorities, and communities to protect forests for 50 years, generating revenue from the sale of carbon credits on public lands within these protected areas, and establishing effective joint forest management among all stakeholders.

Challenges to be overcome:

1) Partnerships between government institutions are difficult to create and maintain. Through this program, USAID and the implementer can help facilitate relationships between these institutions to show how joint forest management can work across ministries.

2) Benefit sharing in the JFM statutory instrument is not defined. To overcome this, a MOU could be made between USAID and the government to learn lessons from this USAID program that the government can use to revise their interpretation of benefit-sharing.

3) The forestry act has not yet been updated. Through this program, more stakeholders will become aware of what REDD+ is and be able to feedback information into the government to help improve the forestry act.

4) There are different forest management practices among the GMAs, forest reserves, and on customary land. This program could assist in helping to standardize the management of forests in all of these areas. Getting each government entity and community to contribute to planning, management, and enforcement of regulations on these lands.

5) Currently, there is no legal framework in Zambia on carbon rights. Through this program, the USAID implementer can assist in teaching communities about what carbon rights entail and how they can benefit from them.

Notes from the afternoon Breakout Sessions where mixed groups were asked to talk on certain topics:

On Carbon Rights:

- Community sensitization is required on REDD+ to facilitate the formulation of any legal-framework
- Communities should have the rights to carbon ownership and be assured protection by the government
- [Revenue from] carbon should not only be generated on private lands but also on communal lands
- Opportunities for non-carbon sales that should be coupled with carbon inventorying include:
  - Beekeeping, wild game (for food and tourism), small and medium enterprises such as mango processing
  - Agro-forestry and conservation farming
  - Promotion of value added [to non-forest timber products]
  - Micro-zoning schemes
On Collaborating Among Institutions:

- Policy harmonization needs to occur through the Forestry Act, Lands Act, Minerals Act, Wildlife Act, and NAP Budgeting
- Integrated Planning should be done (such as the Luangwa Valley Ecosystem)
- Strengthening of the human resource base in government departments would help
- More collaborative meetings should be conducted
- Funding should be provided to joint initiatives / activities

On Standardizing the Different Management Systems in GMAs, Forest Reserves, and Customary Lands

- Authorities: ZAWA on GMAs, Forestry Dept in Reserves, and Chiefs on Customary Lands
- Current Management of Trees:
  o GMA – General management plans and Wildlife Act 12
  o Forest Reserves – Forest management plans and Forestry Act
  o Customary Land – Wildlife Act 12, Forestry Act, Community Bylaws, Local Authority Bylaws, and Traditional Norms
  o District Level – District Council coordinates, Forestry Department provides technical guidance to chiefs, and both ZAWA and Chiefs create integrated management plans with communities.

On Benefit Sharing

- We agree that the statutory instrument on benefit sharing in JFM is not clearly defined
  o An MOU should be signed among the community (traditional leadership and subjects), the government (provincial / district levels) and the development implementer
  o An MOU should clearly stipulate the benefits to communities participating and should be demand driven
  o MOU should articulate clear expectations and responsibilities of the participating partners

Chiefs on Benefit Sharing

- Sub structures needed:
  o Village Level Committees
  o Chiefdom Level Committees (with democratic elections)
- Chief should be the Patron / Matron
- Chiefdom to be like sub-district for the sake of collaboration with government and key stakeholders (should adopt the ZAWA CBNRM bottom up approach)
- Quarterly disbursements of revenues as follows:
  o 10% Chiefs
  o 90% Communities
- No Titles or Deeds should be given for these lands
  o Only community consent needed, renewable on 3 year terms based on performance
- An MOU allowing a USAID implementer to share revenues to be established provided:
  - The traditional authority and the local communities are actively involved from the beginning, during implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
  - Zonal committees should be created according to the size of chiefdoms
  - Capacity building / trainings to local people – to be transparent and accountable
  - Regular review meetings
  - Long term sustainable development plans subject to review every five years for 30 year projects
  - Full involvement of government at all levels

On the Forestry Act

- The 1973 Forest Act lacked the component of community participation in forest management and benefit sharing
- There is need to examine the current draft forest act of 2010 to see if it addresses issues of community participation and benefit sharing
- We need to have an updated Forest Act which will allow us to implement the recommendations of JFM / CBNRM
- Government and other stakeholders should speed up the process of enacting a new forest act – the House of Chiefs can play an important role here
- Whilst waiting for the enactment of the new act, the government should issue expanded statutory instruments
- A revision of other acts and policies that may be of use should be done, such as the ZAWA Act, Local Government Accountability Act, the Chiefs Act, and the Decentralization Policy
- We can still proceed by way of pilot projects based on MOU linked to the statutory instruments
- To ensure understanding and appreciation of the programs, there is need for sensitization of forest management
- Must involve traditional leaders in forest management

Overall Notes of Mention

1) Participants want the government to have weekly sector meetings with stakeholders at the district level – called a cabinet circular
2) Current Forestry Act is from 1973 as says nothing on benefit sharing. The ZAWA Act could provide guidance on how to improve this Act.
3) The draft Forestry Act has moved from centralized to decentralized systems and recognized that there are stakeholders to be taken into account.
4) Government is working on finalizing the Forestry Act as it is in draft form. It is supposed to be tabled in the next Parliament seating.
5) There are needs for local language interpreters to explain to local communities as to what REDD+ is, what carbon rights mean, and what carbon credit revenue generation will entail.
6) Objectives of the implementer must be clearly expressed to communities, to ensure people understand this is not a land grab.