CUTS International

2ND EDITION, 2026.

CLIMATE CHECK









TOP NEWS

- Why Zambia Needs to Embrace Crop Diversification
- Climate Change A Health Emergency- Zambia
- Reforestation as a Solution to Climate Change

BEYOND MAIZE: WHY ZAMBIA NEEDS TO EMBRACE CROP DIVERSIFICATION



By: Josephine Tembo

What happens when the rains fail and the only crop a farmer depends on cannot survive the dry spell? For many farming households in Zambia, this is an increasingly important question as changing weather patterns continue to threaten agricultural production.

Maize remains a major staple crop in Zambia, but depending heavily on a single crop can leave farmers vulnerable to droughts, prolonged dry spells and unpredictable rainfall. Crop diversification offers an opportunity to reduce these risks by encouraging farmers to grow a wider variety of crops suited to their local conditions.



Crops such as sorghum, millet, cassava, cowpeas and groundnuts offer valuable alternatives, particularly in areas that experience frequent dry spells. Legumes such as groundnuts and cowpeas can also help improve soil fertility by adding nitrogen to the soil, supporting healthier soils and more sustainable farming systems.

Beyond improving resilience, growing different crops can strengthen household food security, improve nutrition and create additional income opportunities for farmers.

Embracing crop diversification does not mean abandoning maize. Rather, it is about giving farmers more options, reducing dependence on a single harvest and building farming systems that can better withstand climate shocks.

As Zambia continues to experience the effects of climate change, diversifying what farmers grow could be an important step towards protecting livelihoods, strengthening food security and securing a more resilient agricultural future.

From Waste to Wealth: How Circular Economy Approaches Can Support Climate Action





By: Kazembe Rogers

Climate change and environmental degradation continue to challenge communities, there is growing recognition of the importance of rethinking how resources are used, reused and managed. One approach gaining attention is the circular economy, which promotes reducing waste, reusing materials and recovering value from resources that would otherwise be discarded.

In agriculture and food systems, this approach presents several opportunities. Organic household waste can be converted into compost, agricultural residues can be repurposed, and food waste can be reduced through improved storage, processing and distribution practices.

These approaches can help reduce pressure on landfills, minimise environmental pollution and support more sustainable production systems. They can also create opportunities for young people to develop enterprises around waste collection, recycling, compost production and food processing.

Young people have the potential to transform environmental challenges into economic opportunities by identifying innovative ways of turning waste into useful products and services.

Building climate-resilient communities requires us to rethink not only how we produce, but also how we consume, dispose of and recover resources.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS NOW A HEALTH EMERGENCY - AT COP31, ZAMBIA WARNS



Zambia has called for increased international climate financing to help African countries strengthen their health systems against the growing impacts of climate change.

Green Economy and Environment Minister, Dr. Gilbert Siame, emphasised the need for stronger partnerships between governments, development partners and financial institutions to build climate-resilient health systems.

Speaking during a Ministerial Dialogue on Advancing Global Health through Climate-Resilient Health Systems at COP31 in Antalya, Turkey, Dr. Siame highlighted that climate change is no longer just an environmental concern but an increasingly urgent public health challenge. He noted that prolonged droughts, water shortages and changing disease patterns are placing additional pressure on health systems.

PARLIAMENT EXTENDS CLEANLINESS CAMPAIGN TO 226 CONSTITUENCIES

The National Assembly is extending its Keep Parliament Clean Campaign to all 226 constituencies across Zambia to promote environmental cleanliness and responsible waste management.

Launching the campaign at Kanyama Secondary School in Lusaka, Speaker of the National Assembly, Nelly Mutti, urged Members of Parliament to take the lead in promoting clean and healthy communities.

Lusaka Province Minister, Obvious Mwaliteta, encouraged MPs to utilise the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) to support local waste management initiatives.

Reforestation as a Solution to Climate Change



By: Josephine Tembo

What if planting the right trees could restore exhausted soils, strengthen food production and help slow global warming? Reforestation offers a natural pathway to restoring degraded land, improving soil fertility and building a healthier environment.

Fast-growing and soil-improving tree species, particularly nitrogen-fixing varieties such as Faidherbia albida, Gliricidia sepium and Sesbania sesban, offer valuable opportunities for sustainable land management.

DID YOU KNOW !

Legumes such as beans, groundnuts and cowpeas work with beneficial bacteria in their root nodules to convert atmospheric nitrogen into forms that plants can use.



These trees can improve soil fertility by adding nutrients, particularly nitrogen, through their interactions with soil bacteria. Their leaves also provide organic matter when they decompose, helping improve soil structure and support healthier crop production.

Beyond improving soils, trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store carbon in their trunks, roots and branches, making reforestation an important nature-based solution to climate change. They also help reduce soil erosion, conserve moisture and create habitats for wildlife.

However, successful reforestation is not simply about planting more trees; it is about planting the right trees in the right places and ensuring they survive. Communities and farmers must be encouraged to prioritise locally suitable species, protect young seedlings and manage trees sustainably.

Lusaka Mayor Calls for Greater Responsibility in Plastic Waste Management

Plastic pollution continues to pose a serious environmental challenge in Lusaka, with improperly discarded waste blocking drainage systems and causing urban flooding.

Lusaka Mayor, Chitambala Mwewa, has challenged plastic manufacturers to take greater responsibility for managing plastic waste and supporting efforts to keep the city clean.

Speaking during a meeting with the Zambia Association of Manufacturers (ZAM) at the Civic Centre, Mwewa emphasised the importance of public-private partnerships in addressing the city's waste management challenges.

Meanwhile, ZAM pledged to work with the Lusaka City Council on recycling initiatives to reduce plastic waste, create employment opportunities for young people, and support environmental sustainability.

The development highlights the need for collective action from manufacturers, local authorities and communities to reduce plastic pollution, improve waste management and build cleaner, more resilient cities.

.



Zambia Steps Up Farmer Awareness Ahead of Expected El Niño Conditions



By: Josephine Tembo

As Zambia prepares for the 2026/2027 farming season, the Ministry of Agriculture is stepping up efforts to sensitise farmers on anticipated El Niño conditions and the importance of climate-smart farming.

During an engagement with farmers in Chilanga District, Acting Permanent Secretary (Administration), Dr Chizumba Shepande, emphasised the need for farmers to prepare for potential weather disruptions by adopting sustainable agricultural practices.

Farmers are being encouraged to use early-maturing and drought-tolerant crop varieties, diversify crops, practise conservation agriculture, harvest rainwater and improve water management. The Ministry has also urged farmers to work closely with agricultural extension officers for timely advice on crop selection and farm management.

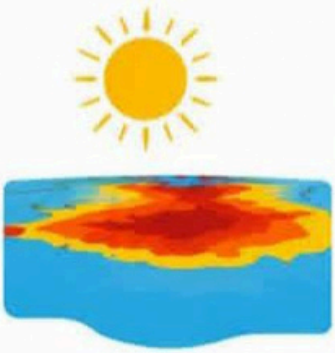
The initiative aims to strengthen farmers' resilience to climate variability, minimise potential crop losses and safeguard national food security. By promoting climate-smart agriculture, Zambia hopes to sustain agricultural productivity even under challenging weather conditions.

WHAT IS EL NIÑO?

El Niño occurs when sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean become warmer than normal.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Pacific Ocean waters become unusually warm.



2. Rising air and heavy rainfall shift eastward over the Pacific.



3. Global wind patterns and tropical circulation are altered.



4. Some regions get excess rain and floods, while others experience drought.



For Southern Africa, El Niño often means: less rainfall, higher temperatures and increased drought risk.

CONSUMER ALERT

Plastic pollution remains a growing environmental concern in Zambia, with improperly discarded plastic waste contributes to blocked drainage systems, flooding and pollution of waterways. Consumers can help address this challenge by reducing their use of single-use plastics, carrying reusable shopping bags and choosing products with less packaging.

Hydropower-dependent countries such as Zambia are vulnerable to drought, which can reduce electricity generation and lead to power shortages. Consumers can help by adopting energy-efficient appliances and considering renewable energy options like solar power.

Reducing food waste can start with simple habits such as planning meals, buying only what is needed, storing food properly and finding creative ways to use leftovers.

CUTS International

📞 Tel: 0211 410 098

✉️ Email: lusaka@cuts.org

📍 Address: E4 Warthog Road, Kabulonga, Lusaka

🌐 Website: CUTS International, Lusaka

COPYRIGHT @2026 - CUTS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED