

REPORT ON GLOBAL WEEK OF ACTION CONCERT IN CHIPATA

16th April 2005

Report by: Susan Mwape

Saturday 16th April 2005, was a big day for Organisation Development and Community Management Trust (ODCMT) and the people of the eastern province, as it marked the end of the Global Week of Action. The Global Week of Action was a week when global Trade Campaigns were emphasised. In Zambia, the ODCMT with support from Christian Aid held its major events; a match past, a musical concert and signature mobilisation campaign in the Eastern Province.

ODCMT's campaign team from Lusaka included all members of staff and representatives from its partner organisations which included One World Africa, Civil Society Trade Network of Zambia, Green Living Movement, Zambia Council for Social Development, Social Economic Literacy Development Club (SELIDEC), Twikantane Womens Nutrition Group and a representative from Christian Aid. Others came from media houses which included Qfm radio, Monitor Newspaper and the Green Time News Paper. Musicians like Red Linso, Chiko Chali and Chax were on board with the team which left Lusaka on Friday 15th April 2005, for a nine hours' drive and got to chipata at 6pm (18:00hrs). Meanwhile the Muvi Posse; James Chamanyazi, Saga, Shamack, Cha and solo left Lusaka on Thursday at 03:00am to make sure that everything was in place ahead of the big day.



Campaigners marching to the David Kaunda Stadium

On Saturday 16 April 2005, the enthusiastic team from Lusaka; lodging at Madzi Moyo, a Reformed Church in Zambia Training Centre, situated about 20 kilometres

from the heart of Chipata district; were up at 05:00am, anxiously prepared to get to the stadium for the big concert on Trade Justice. The whole team was dressed in White t-shirts for the Global week of action and white arm bands. There was a walk of about three kilometres (3KM) through Chipata town to the stadium and hundreds residents joined to show solidarity and support to the cause. When we got to the stadium hundreds of people were already waiting to see what the day would give them.

The Programme at the stadium started with the observation of a moment of silence to remember the late Mr. Francis Banda, former Executive Director of ODCMT and to just reflect on our friends and relatives who have died because of poverty. Thereafter we had the national anthem which was followed by a quick song on trade justice by James Chamanyazi; the song was spiced by the audience chanting "Make Trade Fair", after the song. The song was also a welcome call to the government officials who were present at the event. The Provincial Deputy Permanent Secretary and the Agriculture Coordinator were asked to come forward and were dressed in White arm bands and bandanas, symbolising government's solidarity in the fight against poverty and its commitment to represent its people at international fora.



The Deputy Permanent Secretary; Mr. Joshua Musonda (in blue) and the Provincial Agricultural Co-ordinator Mr. Martin Sishekanu (in green) dressed in the GCAP white bands

Mr. Martin Sishekanu, the Provincial Agriculture Coordinator, gave a speech in which he spoke about the very low prices farmers are paid for their commodities. He said this season; his office has been flooded with complaints of unfair trade from tobacco and cotton farmers who are very bitter. Mr. Sishekanu noted that the Zambian

economy is of a dual nature and as such he emphasised the need for all to focus on local trade even while looking at international trade. He informed the gathering that the Government is currently setting up Agriculture marketing information Centres for flow of information among stakeholders in the Eastern province. He commended ODCMT for organising such an event to sensitise and show solidarity to the many farmers across the country.

Mr. Joshua Musonda, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Eastern Province gave a speech on behalf of the Provincial Minister. He expressed the need to push for change in the trade rules; he expressed his disappointment in the lack of transparency in how buyers determined their prices and how they deducted input costs; especially in cotton farming. He said this led farmers and their representatives to conclude that they were being exploited. He also talked about the Government wanting to see changes in the cotton trade. He said, "The government would like to see a profitable cotton trade that would earn the country foreign exchange, make farmers live off their labour and also support the establishment of job creating industries such as cotton ginneries and textile manufacturing. However, this can only be possible if global trade rules are tailored to accommodate poor countries". This met a round of applause from the audience.



Mr. Joshua Musonda; the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Eastern Province

We then heard a testimony from a cotton farmer Ms. Naomi Tembo, who narrated to the audience how a multinational company which buys cotton in the Eastern province loans farmers' inputs such as seed and pesticides to enable them grow cotton which they later sale to the same company at a very low price. The price of

this cotton is dictated by the multinational company. Farmers at times find themselves with just a receipt indicating that they have paid for the loan and they end up going home empty handed with nothing to take back to their families and children," said Ms. Tembo.

We later had the musicians sing and dance and the excited audience kept chanting for more music. After an hour of non stop music, we heard the plight of two cotton farmers who testified in front of the audience on how they did not gain from their labour. They also expressed their disappointment with the multinational companies for failing to provide protective clothing to farmers. Over three thousand people came to the concert; children and adults, two thousand and forty people (2,040) signed the petitions against unfair trade. The all went home Chanting Slogans of Fair Trade.



Masses at the stadium

The Organisation Development and Community Management Trust (ODCMT) is very humbled by the support we got from the many organisations that took part in the activities of the Global Week of Action and we would like to express our gratitude to the following:

Mr. Joshua Musonda; Deputy Permanent Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Martin Sishakanu; Provincial Agriculture Co-ordinator of Eastern Province and their Delegation.

Christian Aid; the funders of the project, Chalaka Development Project, Zambia Council for Social Development, Civil Society Trade Network of Zambia, Monitor Newspaper, Qfm Zambia, Green Living Movement, One World Africa, Eastern Province Women's Development Association (EPDWA), District Women's Development Association (DWDA), Kagoro Make Trade Fair Group, Social Economic Literacy Development Club (SELIDEC) and Mr. Krishnamurthy Pushpanath for the moral and technical support he rendered to ODCMT throughout the preparations of the Week of Action.

The Musicians: James 'Chamanyazi' Ngoma, Chiko Chali, James 'Red Linso' Banda, Ackim 'Rage', Che 'Saga' Mutale, Charity 'Cha' Mwiinga, Shamack, and the Muvi Posse.



The Muvi Posse Band

Many thanks also go to Ms. Lungu; the Deputy Provincial Community Development officer of the Ministry of Sports, Youth and Child Development, the Zambia Police service, Mr. Mwaba; the driver who gave us transport even at awkward hours, the Chipata Red Cross Society of Zambia for taking care of all the casualties, Breeze Fm-Chipata, Radio Maria-Chipata and all the people that came from the different districts to show solidarity and the audience.

CONCLUSION

The Global Week of Action was fruitful as ODCMT was able to implement the GWA activities successfully. The event has since strengthened ODCMT's relationship with the government, media and other partner organisations who showed up. It increased awareness on trade issues among the stakeholders. However