

By SAM PHIRI (Times of Zambia) in Kalabo Western Province

GOVERNMENT has ordered for an immediate supply of relief food to Ndoka village and other surrounding areas in Kalabo district, Western province.

Minister in the office of the Vice President, Hon. Sylvia Bambala Chalikosa, MP said on Thursday after touring several maize fields that had been adversely affected by a drought resulting into withering of the crop.

Mrs. Chalikosa who was accompanied by Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) National Coordinator, Chanda Kabwe said the situation at Ndoka village was worrisome as people were faced with hunger, a consequence of a barren harvest.

"We need to treat this as an emergency, National Coordinator (Mr Chanda Kabwe) please let's ensure that we do all the paper work as soon as possible so that our people can get the food immediately," she said.

She assured the people of Ndoka of Government's commitment to not only supply the food in time but also improve their welfare and enhance food security.

Meanwhile, Mr Kabwe said Government would as a long-term measure invest in extensive research on what crops could best grow without being affected.

He said it was clear that places like Western Province faced the effects of climate change and needed more of drought tolerant crops such as cassava as a solution.

"Our people need to learn on the kind of crop that would do well in certain climatic condition because if they don't change, they will be facing the same hunger situation year in year out," Mr Kabwe said.

Earlier in Mongu, Mrs Chalikosa officiated at an Asset Mapping World Bank funded workshop where she stressed the importance of climate change mitigation and adaptation following increasing disasters such as droughts and floods.

"Government recognises this fact very well and has been working with cooperating partners to ensure communities' vulnerability to climate related hazards are reduced" she said.

She said the DMMU, with financial support from the World Bank, was implementing a sub - component of the pilot programme for climate resilience (PPCR) aimed at attaining strengthened climate information.

While still in Mongu, she also visited a site where construction materials for belly bridges had been lying idle for over nine years.

Mrs Chalikosa who was clearly not pleased with the status quo instructed the provincial administration of the Road Developed Agency to dispatch the materials to other parts of the country where they would be used.

"We can't be keeping material here for years when other parts of the country are in need of the same, so make arrangements so that they can be moved from here" she said.

Mrs Chalikosa is in Western province for a five-day working visit to mainly assess critical areas affected by natural disasters that needed quick intervention by government under the Office of the Vice president and DMMU.

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