

House of Chiefs

Traditions, Politics and Development

[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [CONTACT](#) [MAP](#) [ZAMBIA](#) [FAITH](#)

SATURDAY, 14 MARCH 2009

The land is available...

Traditional leaders in Northern Province have expressed willingness to provide large portions of land for the proposed \$3bn bio-diesel Chinese project :

....*Delegation leader from the Private Sector Development Reform Programme, Lovemore Simwanda said Bio-mass development PLC, a Zambian company and Wuhan Kaidi holdings of China, plans to invest about US\$ 3bn in the bio-fuel project in Zambia. The investment is expected to create about 50,000 job opportunities for the local people.*

He explained that the team which was targeting five districts in Northern Province was looking for land in excess of 700,000 hectares where to set up plantations for the extraction of bio-fuel. He said the land which was being looked at was that which had been degraded through massive cutting of trees.

Chief Chitoshi and Mukupa Kaoma of Mporokoso district have expressed willingness to provide land for the Bio Diesel project if their areas are found suitable for the project.

The Chiefs told ZANIS in separate interviews recently that they were ready to sit down with the investors so that they could discuss how best the project would benefit their subjects. They observed that they have been longing for investment which would help to improve the living standards of people in their chiefdoms. The districts targeted are Nakonde, Isoka, Chinsali, Mporokoso and Luwingu.



9 comments:

Yakima said...

This could work out well, if the Chiefs can successfully negotiate terms which protect their right to defend their people's interests. By my count the ratio is 1 job for every 14 hectares given over to the company. How does that stack up to other agricultural activity?

20 March 2009 00:34



Cho said...

If something of this magnitude was to proceed, I am confident it would most certainly be under the Landsafe Investment Model we have discussed with Rolfshenton on this blog.

In terms of job creation...1 per 14 hectares sounds poor except the counterfactual might be no jobs. So I guess it's pretty good!

20 March 2009 23:23

Chosanganga said...

Lovemore Simwanda and his Private Sector Development Reform Programme (sic) says that the land they are looking at for jatropha cultivation has been degraded through massive cutting of trees'. I presume this is land where Fitimene, due to population excess, is extensive and on a decreasing planting

SUBSCRIBE VIA EMAIL

Enter your email address:

Delivered by FeedBurner

RECENT COMMENTS

sh indiewsMy greatly learned cousin professor, I w... - 04/11/2012 - Somboko Wa Macholola

At the risk of revealing my ignorance, I would sta... - 04/10/2012 - David P. Chongo

The government of the Republic of Zambia should fre... - 04/01/2012 - Veritas

Kopa had the opportunity to adopt Landsafe in 2003... - 03/26/2012 - I.P.A. Manning (Chosanganga)

All I know is that if Chiefs worked closely with t... - 03/21/2012 - Zambiwild

RECENT POSTS

Kalindawalo stripped, 2nd Edition - 11/23/2012

Kalindawalo stripped! - 11/22/2012

Barotseland woes! - 11/21/2012

A crime of poverty? - 11/20/2012

Restoration of the Native Authority Act? - 11/19/2012

TOPICS

agriculture barotseland business ceremonies children communication corruption crime decentralisation development education energy environment family general governance health history housing investment justice knowledge land law mining planning politics poverty rights succession tourism transport video water wildlife witchcraft women

POSTS ARCHIVE

► 2012 (34)

► 2011 (36)

► 2010 (218)

▼ 2009 (279)

December 2009 (5)

November 2009 (19)

cycle, suggesting the increasing desperation of people trying to meet their food requirements on acidic soils of low fertility. Chiefs, desperate for any development for their increasingly impoverished people, and for an escape from the Malthusian trap, will be susceptible to the blandishments of snake-oil salesman bearing samples and seeking concessions. It is long past the time where the House of Chiefs should take affirmative action to recruit chiefs to the Landsafe Chiefdom Model for the development of customary lands in conformity with local culture, religion and the ecological conditions, the very model their spokesman, James Mutale told the stakeholder meeting preparing the 5th National Development Plan, they fully accepted (but not later included in the 'Plan'). If this is not done with energy and commitment, we will see the continuing plunder of Zambia's natural resources, which rather than raising living standards, will further impoverish the villagers, maintaining their life expectancy at pre-industrial revolution levels.

2 April 2009 08:42

Anonymous said...

Chosanganga,

"If this is not done with energy and commitment, we will see the continuing plunder of Zambia's natural resources, which rather than raising living standards, will further impoverish the villagers, maintaining their life expectancy at pre-industrial revolution levels"

What exactly do you mean? Are you saying if whatever model you are referring to is applied then Zambia's natural resources will not be plundered? The whole issue of jatropha needs a lot of looking into because its promoters are not looking at benefits to Zambia but to the outside world. There was so much talk especially when oil reached its 100s to an extent people even started saying we do not need forests because what are they for, and that all we need is to fatten grassroot peoples' pockets through jatropha growing. Now the goal posts have shifted in favour of the chinese forgetting the people whose pockets were to be fattened. In essence, it is just people like Mr Simwanda who will have their pockets fattened because such vast lands will certainly require mechanization ruling out any manual labour. And I am suprised that economists on this blog are even impressed by thinking job creation is assured.

May I ask, if Jatropha or biofuel is the answer, what is the question?
We shall wait and see.

17 May 2009 12:26

Yakima said...

Anon,

I hope that Chosanganga will forgive me if I misstate his position in any way, however I think that I understand the position for which he was advocating, and will attempt to clarify as best I can. Also, as an early proponent of the use of small percentages of land on rural farms for jatropha cultivation as a means of income diversification, I am both an advocate of biodiesel for transport and/or biomass electrical generation (as opposed to **existing** imported fossil fuel and biomass combustion energy), as well as a strong opponent of the type of monoculture plantation which dominates the biofuels industry in South America, Asia and increasingly in other parts of Africa.

The Landsafe Chiefdom Model itself predates the current debate over energy sourcing, economic diversification, or more specifically jatropha. It would be difficult fully summarize the long national debate over the terms and conditions of land tenure and titling, however if one is interested in researching both the extant positions and history surrounding the issue, abundant material is available. Here I hesitate to claim a comprehensive personal knowledge of the positions of all primary stakeholders, and would rather leave that to others more expert on the legalities involved rather than risk omitting key parts of the dialogue.

While I also hesitate to assume that any two anonymous commentators are in fact the same person, you are certainly not the first such person to raise vehement objections whenever the word "jatropha" is used in the context of rural Zambian development. Since most such discussions have taken place on the House of Chiefs sister-blog Zambian Economist, I assume that your reference to "*economists on this blog*" is a reference to those, and think that

November 2009 (10)

October 2009 (23)

September 2009 (19)

August 2009 (20)

July 2009 (37)

June 2009 (25)

May 2009 (32)

April 2009 (17)

March 2009 (32)

February 2009 (24)

January 2009 (27)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

[Brick World Zambia](#)

[Lusaka Stock Exchange](#)

[Zambian Agriculture Commodities Exchange](#)

SUPPORT

Find us on Facebook

 **House of Chiefs**
Zambia 

125 people like House of Chiefs.



 Facebook social plugin

POPULAR POSTS

[In search of favorable coverage..](#)

An interesting struggle has emerged in Mazabuka between Chief Mwanachingwala and local radio station, in yet another example of the rising ...

[A Motion for An Indigenous Knowledge Policy \(Part 2\)](#)

The second part of the motion for Government to develop on an indigenous knowledge systems policy to interface with other modern knowledge s...

[Chiefs as Members of Parliament? \(Guest Blog\)](#)

I wish to comment on the National Constitutional Conference (NCC) legislative committee's proposal to increase seats for Members of Parliame...

[What should be done about the Barotse question?](#)

The only credible path according to Mbita Chitala is to re-negotiate the Barotse Agreement so as to ensure more regional autonomy of all th...

[Value of initiation ceremonies](#)

Interesting article on the value of "initiation ceremonies" as important

you may have misinterpreted the tone and content of submissions with regard to the assuredness of job creation or degree of proposed reliance on jatropha or other biofuel feedstocks in an overall national energy plan.

To clarify, I am not an economist by training, I am a small business owner (not energy or agriculture related), and would prefer to see a biofuels strategy which favoured SME development rather than large corporations. However I respect the rights of Chiefs and other community leaders to make their own decisions with regard to the welfare of the populations they represent, and have a real world appreciation for the competitive potentials available with economies of scale versus small operators, because I am personally competing with many of them. My initial comment that, "*this could work out well, if the Chiefs can successfully negotiate terms which protect their right to **defend their people's interests***," does not strike me as in any way as ignoring the needs of the grassroots nor promoting anything other than the benefits to Zambia (no offense to the rest of the world, but they can do their own planning and advocacy). If in fact the large plantation strategy is adopted however, I cannot ignore that if the owners are contractually obligated to provide employment for some 50,000 workers, especially if they are skilled and/or semi-skilled labour employing mechanization with equivalent pay scales rather than purely manual labour and/or "sharecroppers", then that represents grassroots incomes equivalent to the entire national mining industry. Not in my opinion the most desirable way to proceed, however not insignificant results from an overall national development perspective.

I personally prefer a model, such as that being employed by First Quantum Minerals as a means for improving their reputation for "social responsibility" (again not the best approach to securing lasting local investment by FDI, but better than nothing), whereby they maintain a nursery which grows jatropha saplings and distributes them "freely" to local smallholders in limited quantities. The saplings are then planted on a small proportion of cultivated land as a supplement to cassava, maize or other food crops. In addition to the added income to be derived from selling seeds for use in biofuels, this can also lower the active overhead costs for these families by enabling home production of soap (a high inflation basic needs basket item) and reducing purchases of charcoal for cooking.

With specific regard to your response to Chosanganga, I admit surprise at the tone of incredulous hostility your words convey (at least to my eye), as it is precisely the fates of those forest resources and the rural populations who live in and around them that he is advocating in favour of. My understanding of the Landsafe model he (and others) are advocating for adoption is that it provides legal mechanisms to protect the rights of the persons currently living on the land in question, whose tenure rights are in no way presently protected under the national tenure and titling system, and thus could be simply displaced without agreement or compensation by the proposed plantations.

The question as I understand it is: What potential domestic industries might provide multiple benefits for the nation and its people, if properly planned and implemented so as to mitigate known potential downsides and minimize the occurrence of unintended consequences, so as to improve balance of trade (via import substitution and/or sustainable value-added export), incomes for rural agricultural families, diversification of economic activity, reduce deforestation due to charcoal burning, and overcome growing regional energy scarcity?
Answer: Among other things, jatropha cultivation and/or biofuels production.

May I ask, are you advocating a strong position in favour of continued total dependence on ever increasing supplies of imported fossil fuels, or perhaps a contrasting view of Zambia that seeks to treat the entire country as some sort of nature preserve? Do you object to importation of fossil fuels from the outside world with the same vehemence that you object to domestic production of biofuels? What alternatives would you recommend to the relevant decision makers (as that is essentially all that can be accomplished via blogs like this)?

17 May 2009 14:39

Chosanganga said...

Yakima gets to the point: I do view the earth as a nature reserve in which man, the biodiversity and the environment must exist in harmony. Perhaps the following hypothesis, which deals more specifically with wildlife-people areas, will throw light on my views.

inclusion economies, as important aspect of producing a more cohesive Zambia, through a s...

The Zambia Landsafe hypothesis

As a basis for reasoning, and without any assumption of its truth, the following is postulated: that the development of Zambia, its people, chiefdoms, associated protected areas, natural resources and wildlife - its commons - is retarded by the continued hegemony of foreign ideas, capital, donors and the urban political and economic elite; that the 94% of Zambia under customary control - being the repository of indigenous culture and religion, and increasingly disenfranchised by a highly centralized and westernized government from its traditional ownership rights in respect of the land, wildlife and natural resources, is the key to a future in which an African people assert their identity, one irreducible from the land and its natural resources; that Zambia's destiny is directly related to the healthy state of customary areas and the protected areas with which they are associated; that the 'ownership' of the land and natural resources of chiefdoms is the key to both the continued well-being of people and the bio-diversity with which they are inextricably linked; that for chiefdoms and protected areas to be conserved and appropriately developed, it will require the adoption of statutory chiefdom institutions in which customary land may be vested and formalized with government so that chiefdom natural resources may then be placed under greater customary control through co-management agreements entered into with central government; that this will then provide the necessary platform for appropriate investment in rural areas, investment which cannot alienate the land from customary control; that the adoption of chiefdom landuse plans will allow for the appropriate development of chiefdoms; and that such Landsafe development will lead to the evolution of devolved systems of Government that are culturally grounded and therefore able to be sustained over time.

24 May 2009 01:26

Anonymous said...

Yakima, I am aware that Chosanganga is on the side of indigenous rights and benefits from their land, if I have understood the Landsafe concept. But I am not sure whether that concept would catch-up with the tide that has swept the biofuels movement in Zambia. At the same time, in adopting that concept mechanisms which assure central government of its continued control have to be put in place - now that takes a bit of time. And you are right, I usually get carried away whenever I come across any Jatropha promotion because they do not add up in terms of economic sense - for Zambia that is, especially with the way proponents on the ground are handling it. I am not at all totally against biofuels but for Jatropha and the myopia around it. For example, it would make sense if it was the sugar companies who were pushing for increase in land for cultivation of biomass to be used in co-generation of electricity. My contention on Jatropha all started from one of meetings I attended where when one participant said that we need to be cautious in the push for Jatropha because we have had experiences with such hype when castor oil or paprika were being promoted under poverty reduction programmes, because instead of bringing the poor farmers the income that was promised all they ended up with was irredeemable poverty because they stopped cultivating food crops in preference for the "manna spinners". Then came opposing comments like "there are some forests where people just walk in and out without gaining anything from them but if we turned them into Jatropha farms, it would give them something for their pocket. Apart from that, we have had a lot of companies that are fermenting chibuku, yet we have not seen a shortage in maize." Well, you have asked me a question as to whether we need to continue depending on imported fuel. Are you sure biofuels will solve Zambia's fuel problems? Has it been established as to how much Jatropha seed you need to feed the whole nation with fuel? And which market are we targeting when we have those fuels since we do not have control over the type of fuel that we have to in JAPANESE vehicles that drive on our roads? I may be wrong but let me ask, do we have any flexi technology and its support in Zambia? There is a lot that needs to be laid down before we go full throttle in the biofuels industry.

"May I ask, are you advocating a strong position in favour of continued total dependence on ever increasing supplies of imported fossil fuels, or perhaps a contrasting view of Zambia that seeks to treat the entire country as some sort of nature preserve? Do you object to importation of fossil fuels from the outside world with the same vehemence that you object to domestic production of biofuels? What alternatives would you recommend to the relevant decision makers?"

I see the Jatropha ventures as taking up the space and attention which we should have been according to the oil and gas ventures. Why not go for oil and

gas which we have been told are in our backyard? I do not buy the climate change issues which are linked to fossil fuels otherwise we would not have seen countries being invaded if fossil fuels are now useless. Since we are technologically handicapped in terms of biofuels (both production and use), we just have to go fossil. In Zambia, the biofuels industry is as hazy as the oil/gas industry is but I would go for the latter solely for the economies of scale inherent in there.

29 May 2009 14:30

Yakima said...

Anon,

Thanks for that reply, I think that I have a much better idea of where you are coming from on this. You ask some important questions, ones which I absolutely agree should be part of the national debate over energy supplies. Since many of the specific points you bring up have been talked about on *Zambian Economist* over the last year or so, I think that it would be more efficient to pick up the macroeconomic aspects of the argument where this conversation from January leaves off. Since there are other anonymous posters in the thread, it might be helpful if you included some sort of tagline in your text to distinguish your comments from the others (e.g. -by Anyone). I would very much like to have your views included in the growing context of debate over energy policy. I think that you have an important perspective that deserves to be heard by policymakers, if we can make them aware of it.

In terms of the House of Chiefs and how customary Tribal rights and laws fit into the national energy and agricultural policy, I wholeheartedly agree that efforts need to be made in order to better inform local people about the choices they face when thinking about which kinds of development would be best for them. I personally advocate in favour of emphasizing long term capital accumulation at the household level, as well as Tribal corporations patterned on the Native North American models. The two can reinforce each other if structured properly, and make use of collective investment in scaling up local development projects while distributing profits via established shareholder models such as those used by many employee-owned businesses worldwide.

Tribal corporations can make use of strong customary personal ties and widespread common ownership to reduce overhead and increase capital reinvestment rates in much the same way that family owned businesses do, but at a larger scale. Tribal corporations are often able to assign values differently from publicly owned corporations or adversarial-electoral government bodies. This enables them to distribute benefits to shareholders in a wide variety of ways, which may better match the priorities of local populations for reinvestment, which often results in high rates of investment diversification into housing, storage and transport, enterprise development, education, health, services, and environmental restoration.

The pressure for higher wages in line with skill acquisition is reduced, because wages are automatically augmented by the worker's own productivity and its effects on shareholder value and dividend returns. This can in turn encourage greater participation by the Tribal corporations in investing in furthering child and employee education. There is further competitive advantage to be gained by vertical integration of value added processing of locally derived raw materials prior to distribution into the larger commodities trading pool.

[New limits from blogspot require a break in text. To be cont...]

29 May 2009 22:25

Yakima said...

[...inued.]

For example, where timber is harvested, concentrate first on the transition to lumber at sustainable rates, then explore the potentials of manufactured wood products and mill byproduct use as inputs for energy or reprocessing. Each viable project requires its own additional support networks, with choices to be made as to local or outside sourcing of materials or products. The case is similar for a biodiesel input such as jatropha oil, which involves several distinct value added steps, each with its own requirements for viability. Jatropha is attractive to a certain class of venture capital, because the initial investment above the cost of land acquisition is relatively low, as is the equipment cost for

the early processing stages. The bottleneck is in storage and transport, which is another reason why biofuels are most cost-effective when used in a manner which reduces the need for transport.

The key difference between the plantation strategy and the localized vertical integration strategy is the phase of production at which transport costs are minimized. In the plantation strategy, intensive cultivation increases the efficiency of harvesting and pressing jatropha seeds for oil and cake, but imposes long term costs on soil health and local biodiversity. This strategy emphasizes the commodification of the product at that stage of value addition, enabling high volume, more centralized reprocessing facilities, but raising transport costs for distribution of any portion of the eventual finished products to local consumers. By contrast, more distributed attempts at vertical integration would impose higher costs for collecting and transporting harvests to a network of smaller, more labour intensive pressing operations (Preferably located alongside appropriately scaled oil-burning generators, boilers and/or value addition enterprises engaged in production of soaps, fertilisers, and biodiesel.). This in turn reduces the cost of transportation within the manufacturing supply chain, as well as redistribution of finished products to local consumers.

Thus small scale distributed cultivation of biofuel feedstocks such as jatropha, palm, rapeseed, sugar, and perhaps even soy and maize, places emphasis on the end-use of raw materials, and deriving local profit and non-farm employment from reducing reliance on relatively expensive national transportation networks. A Tribal corporation can provide a framework in which subsidiary economic activities can cooperate to achieve advantage from vertical integration, while providing a variety of flexible mechanisms for equitable profit sharing between stakeholders that don't conflict with customary distribution of decision making powers over the disposition of Tribal assets.

29 May 2009 22:27

[Post a Comment](#)

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

Copyright © The House of Chiefs 2007 - 2010. All rights reserved. Picture Window template. Powered by Blogger.

DISCLAIMER

This is a personal web site, produced in my own time and solely reflecting my personal opinions. Statements on this site do not represent the views or policies of my employer, past or present, or any other organisation with which I may be affiliated.