



REPORT PERIOD: APR 2011 – JUN 2011

## MAJOR ACTIVITIES IN THIS PERIOD

April: Sensitization meeting for 244 villages

May: Lead Farmers' Plenary meeting, Sensitization meeting

June: TOT for LFs in Soil erosion control and Tree growing

## SUCCESSFUL LEAD FARMERS' PLENARY MEETING

On May 11, 2011, the COVAMS project held a big event "LFs' Plenary Meeting" with 900 Lead Farmers (LF) of Tree Growing, Soil Erosion Control and Gully Control from 169 villages at COMESA Hall Blantyre. The COVAMS project invited many guests especially seven District Commissioners (DCs) from the concerned districts of Middle Shire catchment area, and the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Environment Mr. A. Livunza as the guest of honor. The meeting was successfully conducted in such way that the project showed its achievement in terms of numerous participation and commitment of the farmers to the activities to all the participants of the meeting. As a result, most of the guests, if not all, were impressed with the results of the project activities and recognized the importance of the continuation of the activities in order to mitigate siltation in the Shire River.



COVAMS Lead Farmers

The event was not the first time but second one. The first one was held in April 2010 in order to provide an opportunity for the LFs to share their experiences of their activities as well as to recognize them as skilled LF by giving certificates to those who fulfilled their mission.

However, the intention of having the event for this year was different from that of last year.



Presentation of Certificate to a Lead Farmer

The main intention was to extend the activities of the COVAMS project to other concerned districts and to get more attention from the concerned ministries in order to get support for the districts when they initiate the activities along the catchment area.

In order to achieve the aim, the project management staff visited concerned districts to meet the DCs and explain what the project is all about beforehand. The management also explained the aim of the meeting to the Forestry Department and JICA Malawi office for the approval and support. Simultaneously, preparation of speech by selected Village headman and LFs was done.

Some impacts were observed after the meeting. The invited DCs mentioned the scale of the activity, while the Deputy Director of Forestry Department showed strong willingness to have phase 2 project. Moreover, one of the Conservation Coordination Officers (CCO, previous PIU) reported that the LFs of a group village are now showing strong commitment. They started to plan meetings and hold the meetings even without the CCO's presence.

We thank all the guests, Village heads, CCOs and project staff for your commitment and support. Hadn't it been for your cooperation, we could not have conducted this meeting successfully.

## SENSITIZATION MEETINGS TO TARGET VILLAGES

There were sensitization meetings for expansion of activities covering the whole target areas of TA Kuntaja and TA Kapeni. The meetings started with briefing to TAs about villages which we have included for 2011/2012 activities, achievements and challenges faced during 2010 fiscal year. After briefing TAs, we had a meeting with TAs, Group headmen, village headmen and village Development committees to brief them about COVAMS expansion, objectives and approaches.



Briefing by TA Kuntaja to Village Heads

Then, there were village to village meetings conducted by CCOs in 75 new villages where they oriented the villagers about COVAMS objectives and approaches.

They also re-sensitized 169 old villages on achievements and challenges faced during 2010 fiscal year so that those villages which didn't do well should realize their short falls and improve. Those villages which did well, to continue, and set good examples to other villages

During sensitization and re-sensitization more than 16, 000 people attended, this shows that people are really interested and willing to participate in all activities under COVAMS Project. Currently COVAMS is working in 244 villages of TA Kuntaja and TA Kapeni.



Sensitization meeting for the Group Village Head Msambuzi and Village Heads

## TOT AND BRUSH-UP FOR LEAD FARMERS

CCOs conducted TOTs for the LFs of new villages in 2011 (75 villages) and replacements of the lead farmers with some reasons in the 169 old villages from the previous year. Brush-up trainings for certified LFs were conducted as well in the same period by CCOs.

The themes conducted under these TOT and brush-up were tree growing and soil erosion control. 13 sessions were done in tree growing for TOT with a total of 92 lead farmers trained out of which 42 were female and 50 were male. In soil erosion control 14 sessions were done and a total of 105 Lead farmers were trained from which 51 were female and 54 were male. Concurrently brush-up for certified farmers in antedating villages were conducted during which 38 sessions were done in tree growing and 358 lead farmers were trained out of which 183 were female and 196 were male. In soil erosion control, 42 sessions were done with a total of 395 lead farmers trained from which 199 were female and 196 were male. All these trainings were conducted from the last week of May up until the first week of July in readiness for the trainings lead farmers conduct for their fellow villagers in the COVAMS project area.

### "From the editor"

The training for the fellow villagers by LFs for both tree growing and soil erosion control should have started in June, according to the work plan of 2011. Nevertheless, TOT and brush-up were conducted in June. All the available CCOs tried their best for conducting those training but it was difficult to catch up with the time. It can be attributed to small number of trainers against the number of villages targeted this year. Efficient utilization of certified and good performing LFs for at least brush-up should be considered for the farmers to start their activities in time.



For further information and questions, please contact

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