



REPORT PERIOD: AUG 2010 – DEC 2010

## DEVELOPMENT AFTER MIDTERM REVIEW

The review team left the project with eight recommendations for further improvement of the project management and activities. One of the recommendations was 'Strengthening of the Collaboration and Implementation Structure in GoM' and there was some progress since then.

The main aim of this recommendation was to secure sustainability of soil conservation activities after project cooperation period. For this aim, District Council (DC) is expected to take initiative and start soil conservation activity in new area in the District.

To implement this recommendation, COVAMS took following steps after discussed the issue with DPD. First step was to attend the District Executive Committee (DEC) meeting in August 2010 to explain about COVAMS to DEC members and appealed the urgency of the soil conservation measures to be expanded to other TAs within the middle shire area. At that DEC meeting, the DC instructed DECS to discuss how District Council take an action. Following the instruction from the DC, DESC meeting was called in September 2010. At the meeting a proposal to form task force was agreed. Nominated members of the task force were, DPD as a chair, DEO as a secretary, DADO, DCDO, DFO, ADFO, LRO and COVAMS.

The proposal was explained and adopted at the DEC meeting in November 2010.

It is a hope that the task force meeting will be called very soon and to start planning way forward to realize activities on the ground for the next planting season.

\*\*GoM :Government of Malawi, DPD: Director of Planning and Development, DEO:District Environmental Officer

DADO: District Agricultural Development Officer DCDO:District Community Development Officer, DFO: District Forestry Officer

ADFO: Assistant District Forestry Officer, LRO:Land Resource Officer

## CONTOUR RIDGING

Training for Lead Farmers (TOT) was conducted from May to June 2010. Some Lead Farmers (LF) were trained by PIUs while others were trained by Senior LFs (SLF). SLFs are the LFs who performed very well in 2009 in their specialization and selected for conducting sensitization meeting and TOT for new LFs of the villages where present PIUs doesn't cover. The TOTs done by SLFs were monitored by PIUs and concluded that most of their performances were no difference with the one of PIUs. The project trained 248 new LFs in 2010, and it accumulates 349 LFs together with 2009 LFs.

Training in Contour ridging by trained LFs was commenced in July 2010 and ended in November 2010. During the period, around 10,000 farmers participated in the training and around 4,000 farmers (3,700 for the new villages of 119) practiced the contour ridging in their fields.

To enhance the farmers practice, the project added Maize growing training for them so that they would understand more in the mechanism why maize yield is increased by contour ridging. However, only 1,400 farmers participated in the training and it did not help to accelerate farmers' practice, especially in the 50 villages of 2009.



Harvested Water



Contour Ridge Making

## SMALL SCALE GULLY CONTROL

In the area where COVAMS Project is working with the community thus T/A Kapeni and T/A Kuntaja there are a lot of gullies which were caused because of poor farming methods .The communities were sensitized on the effects of gullies which are draining away their fertile soils to the Shire River. After being convinced the communities seek assistance from the project so that they can start controlling the developed gullies.

With shortage of staff on the ground to cover 169 villages, the project suggested to them if they can provide volunteers to be trained as lead farmers on small scale gully control techniques so that they can be able to train fellow farmers. The villagers elected gully control lead farmers totaling 202 for T/A Kapeni 111 (Female 37, Male 74) for T/A Kuntaja 91 (Female 30, Male 61).

By the end of December, there are 18 sessions of TOT on Gully Control and 123 LFs out of 202 were trained.

These lead farmers have started training fellow farmers in their villages and we hope a lot of gullies will be controlled.



Brush Wood Check Dam



Stone Check Dam

## WOODLOT MANAGEMENT ENSURES AVAILABILITY OF FOREST PRODUCE

Tree planting and conservation of existing trees and forests are part of the tree growing components under COVAMS and these have taken root and come to stay at Chitawira village. The people in this village are committed to caring for their woodlot planted in the 2009/10 planting season, including conservation of their Village Forest Area where beekeeping is going on well.

A visit to the forest site revealed that sustainability of management practices has taken root. Using their indigenous technical knowledge, they pruned their *Senna siamea* (casia) after seeing that the trees were producing more branches. This pruning will help these trees to grow in a straight manner and increase height quickly. Protection against fire has also been considered hence the weeding in the woodlot to reduce fire hazards such as underbrush.

The bigger side of their Village Forest Area is the indigenous woodland where bee keeping is being practiced. It also has a variety of tree and herb species some of which have medicinal value such as Chipembere.

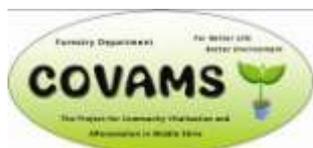
The diversity of their forestry activities is so assuring that the village shall have a steady supply of Honey, Poles, firewood, mushrooms and medicine.



Communal Woodlot, Chitawira



Existing Forest, Chitawira



For further information and Questions, please contact

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