

Project Update: May 2009

Introduction

The project activities were initiated in February 2009. The project aims at contributing towards the conservation of the critically endangered Sagalla Caecilian *Boulengerula niedeni* that is endemic to Sagalla. This is through creation of awareness of the organism and the need to conserve it, rehabilitation of the indigenous forest through raising and planting of indigenous tree species and later the removal of the exotic tree species especially eucalyptus and the introduction of fish farming as an alternative livelihood that would contribute towards the restoration of the wet areas.

Activity Implementation

A number of activities have been initiated as detailed below:

○ Awareness creation

Four public meetings have been held in the area i.e. a public meeting in each of the four sub-locations covering the area. These were organised through the Provincial Administration officials i.e. the Chief of Sagalla location and his four assistant chiefs in charge of each of the sub-locations. The message passed across included the existence of the critically endangered Sagalla caecilian, the need to conserve it, the threats to its survival and the intervention measures. Also the link



between its survival and that of the residents was highlighted. The activities that will be implemented by the project and the approach to be used were explained. The approach would use Participatory Methodology that would involve working with the residents through their community groups such as the engagement of existing groups with tree nurseries in raising the tree seedlings and their planting, and the formation of Common-Interest-Groups for those farmers that will be involved in fish farming.

○ Tree Seedlings raising

During the public meetings, the community was asked to forward names of groups that are involved in tree seedling raising for consideration in engagement in raising the seedlings. So far, names of four groups have been forwarded and these are undergoing assessment in order to determine the two best suited to be engaged in the activity of raising the indigenous tree seedlings.



○ Training in fish pond construction and fish farming

The training of farmers in fishpond construction started in earnest and already 30 farmers have been trained. One fishpond construction has been completed and two other are underway. Further training of other farmers has been planned within the next month. This activity has also attracted the interest of a secondary school (Mshimba Secondary School) nearby whose Agriculture Club members have been involved in the training.

