



Empowering rural farmers

Charles Chipwanyepwanye has a vision for farming in rural Zambia which the **CHIANSI IRRIGATION PROJECT** will help him to achieve.

Demu North and South lie in arid southern Zambia. The communities established a cooperative five years ago to coordinate efforts to improve farming yields. Charles says, “We meet under these trees to have our meetings. People are committed, they will travel some distance on foot or by bicycle to attend.”

He says, “I feel very, very happy to hold the role of Chairperson. My community understand my vision where farming and irrigation are concerned.”

Relying on rain-fed agriculture means that farmers only plant one crop per year, leaving them vulnerable to fluctuating rainfall. “In the past three years we have noticed changes in weather patterns due to climate change. We are not assured of enough rain to establish our plants each season – it can be a disaster if there is not enough rain.”

Chiansi Irrigation will link Demu North and South to water from the Kafue River. Water bailiffs and agricultural extension officers - employed by InfraCo Africa's private sector partner - will support communities to maximise yields by sharing their commercial farming expertise. “The Extension Officer will sensitise us as to which crops will do best. Irrigation will improve the standard of farming here.”

Looking to when the water comes, Charles says, “We are aiming high! We will feed our nation! We will be able to afford to send our kids to school, to feed our families and to buy vehicles. Water is life!

I am smiling because I have a vision. We need to let all farmers change their lives for the better!”