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# Package 78, Script 10

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**Local Experts Give Practical Advice to Care for the Environment \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Notes to Broadcaster**

The natural environment provides the basics of all human life – air, water, food and shelter. Over time, the environment has been damaged because soil, trees and water have been misused. Sometimes poverty forces people into making bad decisions. In other cases, it is greed. Everyday people must take actions to protect the environment. It is essential for life now and in the future.

### *Theme music*

**Host:** Today’s program deals with one of the Millennium Development Goals which was unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at the Millennium Summit in September 2000. In this program, we shall focus on *Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability.*

### *Soft music*

**Host:** According to the United Nations Development Programme, in the world today 2.6 billion people lack access to adequate sanitation; over 1 billion people are without access to safe drinking water; and five million people, mostly children under the age of five, die every year from water‑borne diseases caused by inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene. Damage to the environment increases each year, mainly because of poor land use including the removal of forests and loss of soil fertility. The situation is critical in developing countries, including the towns and farms in South Lubero, DRC (*use appropriate local information*).

To achieve environmental sustainability, the first step is to identify the root causes of environmental degradation. Then we can look for remedies. We shall give the floor to our guests who will talk first about the causes of environmental destruction. *(Broadcaster: please introduce the guests who are environmental activists and experts)*

**Mrs Rachel K:** I would like to mention two factors which degrade our environment. The first is insufficient and even, in some communities, non-existent drinkable water. The second is a lack of respect for public hygiene measures, which creates poor living conditions and contaminates our food. This lack of respect may be a result of ignorance, negligence, and poverty, but it is also caused by a lack of motivation to act.

**Host:** Would you agree with that, Mrs. Josaphat P? And do you have anything else to add?

**Josaphat P:** I agree with Mrs. Rachel K. And I would like to add that we, as farmers, are suffering from erosion and desertification which are caused by several factors: intensive woodcutting, farming practices with plants that are not appropriate for local conditions, cultivation practices which use deep ploughing, not keeping the soil covered, and disregard of crop rotations and combinations.

### *Musical break*

**Host:** We’ve mentioned some of the root causes of environmental destruction. Now let’s talk about some of the solutions. Mrs. Rachel K, what can we do to ensure that our families have clean water to drink?

**Rachel K:** First of all, those villages and towns which have water sources should ensure the daily cleanliness of water access points. For villages or towns without water sources, we must look for a water source and build a clean water supply system.

**Host:** How can we ensure that water is not contaminated?

**Rachel K:** We need to ensure good hygiene. One solution is to build outhouses. Outhouses should be three to four metres deep and at least 20 metres from a house or school and covered with a cabin. We also need to keep public spaces like markets clean. Look at all the plastic bags lying in our markets and streets these days. Why can we not stop throwing these bags everywhere? Let us collect them and dispose of them. Also, at home we need to use garbage containers for the collection, disposal and treatment of waste materials.

**Host:** Since you’ve mentioned waste materials, can you explain to us how we can treat the different kinds of waste materials so as not to damage the environment?

**Rachel K:** There are several methods which can be used.Often, they can be burned. This has the advantage that all waste materials disappear. But it can cause air pollution and destroy ground cover which can lead to soil erosion. Burning should be done as a last choice and it should always be done carefully so there is no risk of a forest or house fire. Children and pregnant women should always stay away from burning garbage pits because there are poisons in some plastics.

**Host:** So burning is a last choice. What are some other ways to dispose of waste?

**Rachel K:** Degradable materials such as fruits, vegetables, wood, and crop residues can be composted or buried in a shallow pit in the ground. This method is better than burning because it both controls waste and produces fertilizer for gardens or fields. Also, some materials can be recycled, including plastic and glass containers, metal and wood*.* This means that new goods are made from used and abandoned goods. We can *reuse* certain goods and we can also begin to *refuse* certain things such as plastic bags which end up as litter.

**Host**: So, to summarize: depending on what kind of waste materials we have, we can compost or bury them, recycle them, reuse them, refuse them or, if necessary, burn them safely. Is that correct?

**Rachel K**: Exactly.

**Host:** Thank you, Mrs. Rachel K. Now, I’d like to ask you a question, Mrs. Josaphat P. Do you have any advice to prevent erosion and desertification in our towns and farms?

**Josaphat P:** There are four things I want to mention. The first is: plant trees. Trees help in so many ways. They protect the soil against erosion; they purify the air that we breathe; they give us shade and retain soil moisture; and they provide us with medicines, fruit, fuel and timber. It is not difficult to plant a green fence around your fields and use nitrogen-fixing shrubs like *Tithonia* (Mexican sunflower) to help increase soil nitrogen and phosphorus to benefit the crops.

The second thing we can do to stop erosion and desertification is to reduce soil tillage by ploughing less deeply. There is a technique called “zero tillage” that does not involve digging up the entire field but rather only the spot where the seed is planted. Thirdly, we should ensure that the soil is always covered by using mulches of crop residues and by planting cover crops. Mulch helps to keep the soil from drying out and it slowly breaks down and provides nitrogen to the crop. Finally we can help prevent erosion by rotating crops and using traditional combinations of crops such as beans and maize.

***Theme music fades up then under host.***

**Host:** I want to thank both of our speakers today for coming on our show to talk to us about ensuring environmental sustainability. *(Pause)* All of us must live in a healthy and sustainable environment. But to make this happen, we must take actions to protect the environment. We should consider the environment not as an enemy, but rather as a friend, and commit ourselves to ensuring a sustainable environment for future generations.

### *Theme music up and under closing announcements, then out.*

### Acknowledgements

Contributed by Saül Ndungo M., Radio FIDEMIEL – FEN (ALIR), Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Reviewed by: Helen Hambly Odame, University of Guelph.

# Information Sources

Millennium Development Goals. *Footsteps*, No. 63, June 2005, p. 15.

The promise of Conservation Agriculture. Developing Countries Farm Radio Network, Package 76, Number 1, October 2005.

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