EU provides € 6 million to improve access to justice in Zambia

The European Commission today approved its contribution to a project to strengthen the justice sector in Zambia, making available €6 million from the European Development Fund (EDF).

The objective of this project, which has to date been funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and is now in its second phase – is to support five key institutions involved in the delivery of justice to Zambian citizens. The project will aim at revising the system of case handling, delivering training to service providers and enhancing courts and other infrastructure, with a view to increase access to justice, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalised in the Zambian society.

Zambia is a democratic state, whose legal system is well-established, with police and local court structures existing in each district. Under the Zambian Constitution, the Judiciary is established as an independent arm of the government, free from interference by the Executive, and mandated to ensure justice for all, irrespective of social status. The overall rationale for designing and implementing an Access to Justice project in the country is the strong linkage between good governance, safety and security and access to justice on the one hand and poverty reduction on the other. A fair and predictable justice delivery system creates favourable preconditions for economic agents to engage in production, trade and investment, thereby expanding poor people’s employment opportunities and income.

The project therefore aims to increase access to justice and to enhance access to justice for the poor and vulnerable at four levels: effectiveness and efficiency of justice delivery agencies; physical access; financial access and technical access. Activities will include efforts to improve case flow management, to improve police protection of poor and marginalised groups, as well as construction of Justice Houses and sensitisation campaigns targeting vulnerable groups. The project targets five national institutions – the Judiciary, the Police Service, the Prisons Service, the Legal Aid Board and the Directorate of Public Prosecutions – and will also be supported by GTZ through the provision of technical assistance.

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