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PRESS RELEASE

ZIMBABWE ALTERNATIVE MINING INDABA 2020 OPENS IN BULAWAYO

Bulawayo, 30 September 2020 - The 2020 Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI) opens in Bulawayo and it will run from the 30th of September to the 2nd of October 2020 under the theme “***Towards an inclusive and equitable US\$12 billion mining industry anchored on sustainable mineral resource management***”.

The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) host this annual event whose thrust is to influence just and equitable mining and mining reforms for achieving sustainable development.

The 2020 Indaba will provide a platform for dialogue amongst various stakeholders in the mining sector which include people from mining host communities, Parliamentarians, government ministries, development partners, mining companies, civil society organisations and faith-based organisations to deliberate on mining related issues in Zimbabwe.

The context that informs the 2020 thematic focus is the Government of Zimbabwe’s vision of an ambitious US\$12 Billion Mining Industry by 2023 hinged on a number of deliverables including but not limited to optimum benefits to the country and its people, increased exports and foreign currency generation, enhanced investment and capacity building, increased productivity and employment creation; and greater value addition. If successful, the plan is envisioned to mark an approximate 340% increase from the US\$2.7 billion as at 2017. However, promising as it seems, the success or failure of the mining plan largely rests on the need for strong political will to address the transparency and accountability deficit currently bedevilling the sector.

Despite being endowed with vast mineral resources ranging from the most precious stones and metals including platinum, diamond and gold, Zimbabwe is one of the most poverty-stricken countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Africa at large. The majority of citizens are wallowing in abject poverty. This is quite evident in mining host communities which are not deriving any meaningful benefit from the resources extracted in their areas. Instead of realizing social and economic justice from mining activities in their areas, mining host communities are left with ecological debt, entrenched poverty and inequalities in various forms. The mining sector has not been spared by endemic corruption, rampant abuse of resources and secrecy surrounding the entire public resources management spectrum in Zimbabwe. The government’s commitment to join the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative presented in the 2020 Budget Statement is a welcome development only if it is accompanied by strong political will to ensure its success. Against this background, the

2020 ZAMI participants will deliberate on how they can influence just and equitable mining to achieve sustainable development.

ZAMI is part of the initiatives of the Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI) platforms that have been facilitated by various organisations across the globe. At the local level, ZAMI is a build-up event from the Ward Alternative Mining Indabas, Constituency Alternative Indabas, District Alternative Mining Indabas (DAMIs) and Provincial Alternative Mining Indabas (PAMIs) held in different parts of the Country. In 2020, two Provincial Alternative Mining Indabas were held in Midlands and Manicaland.

ZAMI creates a platform for various stakeholders to interface and influence policy change towards promoting transparency and accountability in mineral resource governance. Alternative Mining Indaba Chair, Nyaradzo Mutonhori had this to say,

“This year’s ZAMI comes at a time when we are faced with the global COVID-19 pandemic which has affected the economy and the livelihoods of thousands, not just in Zimbabwe but across nations. The mining sector is expected to spur economic growth especially on our drive towards the Upper Middle-Income Agenda (Vision 2030). Therefore, the 2020 ZAMI will see us interrogating whether we are on track as we strive to achieve the USD12 billion mining industry by 2023. The ZAMI is a space dedicated to amplifying community voices and this year because of COVID19 we will have different side sessions which will also be broadcasted live”.

ZCC’s Head of Programmes, Ronald Nare added saying;

“We are happy to be part of this annual event. As ZCC we are known for having advocated successfully for a national dialogue process as a strategy of addressing Zimbabwe’s national question and this national question is nothing without the economic justice dimension. We want a Zimbabwe that is just, united, peaceful and we want prosperity for all. For this reason, it is important that we discuss sustainable mineral resource management and this year’s ZAMI affords us such an opportunity,”

ZIMCODD’s Executive Director, Janet Zhou says ZAMI provides a platform where stakeholders can deliberate and influence policy change she added;

“We are deliberating on how we can ensure the USD12 billion economy is anchored on sustainable mineral resource management. It is important to discuss such issues because we do not want to discuss economic growth without a human face. It is sad that we are convening during COVID-19 times. Without the global pandemic, the 2020 ZAMI could have been a festive for stakeholders to talk about the mining sector including energising one another but unfortunately we have only managed to gather a few. Am sure that the deliberations which we are going to have during this Indaba are going to inform our future and how we move forward as a people. Am hopeful that we will continue at the different levels until we meet again in person”.

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