



THE Weekend Reader

"Your Weekly Read on Debt, Development & Social & Economic Justice"

ZAMI 2021, A PLATFORM TO ASK ON THE MINING SECTOR

#HowFar

Next week, between the 2nd and the 8th of October 2021, civil society and mining host communities' attention will be on asking duty bearers multiple #HOWFAR questions on the mining sector.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) and Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) will co-host the 10th edition of the Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI).

The ZAMI will run under the theme **Development Speaks: Amplifying Community Voices for improved accountability and transparency in natural resources' governance in Zimbabwe.**

The Indaba will provide a platform for asking critical #HOWFAR questions in the natural resources sector that are based on the lived realities of mining host communities. The platform equally presents duty bearers such as parliamentarians, representatives from government ministries, development partners, mining companies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations, faith-based organisations, and other stakeholders an opportunity to answer some of the pressing questions that communities have on how resources from the sector are managed.

Unlike the Mining Indaba, which is a platform for government and business, the Alternative Mining Indaba is guided by the principle of inclusivity and is primarily dedicated to amplifying community voices, giving them an opportunity to ask their #HOWFAR questions and hold duty-bearers to account.

This 10th edition of ZAMI comes at a time that ZIMCODD has recently launched a platform for citizens to demand accountability under the #HOWFAR campaign which since its launch has managed to build momentum amongst different stakeholders.

ZIMCodd is taking this year's ZAMI as an opportunity to magnify demands for accountability on Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) obligations of the mining sector. A broad range of ESG issues like the impacts of mining on climate change, water use, labour rights, health, safety, and corporate governance will be on the spotlight during this year's edition of the ZAMI.

Over the years, ZAMI has remained a pivotal annual advocacy and lobbying space dedicated to showing the importance of society and the environment to natural resource developers. The COVID-19 pandemic has made conspicuous the need for sustainable economic systems centred on resilient economic, physical, and social infrastructure. This year, therefore is expected to have accentuated and emotive conversations because of how the COVID-19 has worsened the realities of communities.

Various issues that matter to communities will be discussed during the ZAMI and these include the lack of meaningful consultations of communities during decision-making processes over natural resources, limited clarity of roles among local level institutions pertaining authority and power over devolution funds, outdated development plans in rural districts, rising allegations of abuse of workers by mining companies including foreign owned mining companies, limited environmental monitoring initiatives, increase in land and environmental degradation (e.g., rivers being mined and road distracted). Gender based violence (GBV), school dropouts, child labour, child marriages, sextortion, and deepening forms of inequality.

Whilst the ASM gold sector contributed over 52% of the total deliveries during the first 7 months of 2021¹, the ZAMI will provide an opportune platform to ask #HOWFAR has been the progress towards formalization of ASM in the country. With an estimation of between 500 000 – 1,5 million artisanal and small-scale miners², asking questions on how this sector is managed remains critical and a clarion call that should be expected from the participants of the 2021 ZAMI.

With the #HOWFAR campaign already bringing to light the poor governance, lack of transparency and accountability in the mineral sector and public finances as detailed in the Auditor General's Reports, the 2021 ZAMI will be turned into a critical platform where the communities expect some concrete responses.

Although government has so far detailed some Mega Deals with various entities including mining companies in its response to the #HOWFAR campaign, the lack of transparency on governments' contracts and deals with large scale investors continue fuelling corruption and inequality. Furthermore, the government continues to offer harmful tax incentives, using opaque resource backed loans with the national debt remaining unsustainable.

1. <https://miningzimbabwe.com/small-scale-gold-producers-outshine-primary-producers/>
2. www.pactworld.org/a%20golden%20opportunity

A very pointed #HOWFAR question for the government for the ZAMI is the adoption of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). To curb Illicit financial flows (IFFs) in the extractive sector which continues to cause revenue losses which immediately affects budgets and social service financing, EITI provides a concrete solution and communities will need to know how government has committed to establishing EITI in the country. For years now, the willingness to join EITI has become a favourite government propaganda with multiple announcements of intentions to join by the Minister of Finance in budget statements that stretch for over a decade now.

In 2021, there have been various reports on whose findings are critical to ask #HOWFAR and these include Cartel Power Dynamics in Zimbabwe³, Illicit gold markets in the East and Southern Africa⁴, Decrypting illicit gold trade in Zimbabwe⁵, Shadows and shells: *Uncovering an offshore business empire in Zimbabwe*⁶ whose central theme has been on exposing rogue IFFs in the extractive sector.

Between the 2nd and 8th of October follow the ZAMI conversations on various ZIMCDD social media platforms on #ZAMI2021 and #HOWFAR.

3. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-02-09-zimbabwe-explosive-cartel-report-uncovers-the-anatomy-of-a-captured-state/>
4. <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/illicit-gold-east-southern-africa/>
5. <https://www.sarwatch.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Decrypting-Illicit-Gold-Trade-in-Zimbabwe.pdf>
6. <https://thesentry.org/reports/shadows-shell-games/>