

2017 ZAMI: Promoting Responsible and Accountable Governance of Minerals

The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD), Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) and Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) convened the 6th edition of the Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba(ZAMI) from the 4th-5th October 2017, an event which was held at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Bulawayo and attended by approximately 200 people. The indaba ran under the theme, “Promoting Responsible and Accountable Governance of Minerals” and stakeholders who attended the event included the Minister of Mines and Mining Development, various line Ministry representatives, local authorities, the private sector, civil society, stakeholders drawn from mining communities and the media fraternity.

Zimbabwe prides itself of vast mineral deposits but unfortunately host communities have not benefitted much from mining exploitation. Therefore the Indaba is an alternative platform for increased participation of stakeholders’ especially mining communities. Multiple stakeholders must openly and continuously discuss opportunities and challenges derailing the aspect of good and accountable governance in the mining sector.

There is increased demand for transparency and accountability in the mining sector whose revenue, if fully realised, can transform the lives of many Zimbabweans and address social and economic challenges currently bedevilling the country. Poorly governed mineral sectors are prone to fiscal leakages, forced displacement, conflict and environmental degradation among other cocktail of problems. Therefore, a multi-stakeholder approach in mining governance and reform is of paramount importance.

The 2017 ZAMI objectives were;

- To discuss the ongoing policy and legal developments in the mining sector as well as shape critical aspirations of communities and the public.
- To provide an alternative space for stakeholders to openly engage and discuss some of the opportunities and challenges affecting broad based socio-economic development from Zimbabwe’s mineral wealth.
- To come up with legal and policy recommendations for improving mineral resources governance for better service delivery.

Topics discussed during the 1st day of the Indaba included Gender and Extractives: Women’s Bodies, Violence and Extractivism; Natural Resources, Governance and Development; Tax Justice, Illicit Financial Flows; Use of Open Data to Promote Transparency and Accountability; Towards Climate Justice in Zimbabwe; Artisanal Small Scale Miners Ease of Doing Business Reforms; Exploring Opportunities to Empower Communities; and Business and Human Rights among others. The 2nd day of the Indaba provided a platform where participants interfaced with Government Officials. The Ministries also took the platform to give an overview of policy initiatives aimed at transforming the mining sector.

From the deliberations held during the two days, the participants made the following demands:

- Institutions that regulate mining issues must be strengthened to safeguard the rights of communities since the extractives industry's projects are highly disruptive to the environment and sometimes negatively impact on people's livelihoods;
- The Human Rights Commission must not be limited to investigating violations of human rights but also the power to enforce;
- BRICS are increasingly becoming a dominant investing force in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. Thus, BRICS investment should create the much needed employment for local communities especially in the extractive industries and the investment should be premised on a win-win situation marked by equal prioritisation of human rights over economic benefits;
- Stakeholders in the mining sector especially mining companies must fully partake in Community Benefit Schemes which include Community Share Ownership Trust Schemes. Investment into CSOTs should be mandatory while clear consequences should be stipulated for non-compliance;
- The Mines and Minerals Bill should address the current miner-farmer conflicts that are not regulated by the Mines and Minerals Act of 1961. The Bill must also include formalisation of artisanal mining through a special mining permit which should be affordable. The Government must ensure that this comes to fruition by putting in place a Statutory Instrument on special mining permit;
- Mineral revenue transparency and information accessibility are needed in the mining sector to allow Zimbabwean citizens to validate if they are getting a fair share from mineral resources;
- To promote transparency and accountability in the mineral resource sector, CSOs must advocate for the establishment of a national tax justice network to monitor illicit financial flows in Zimbabwe and this body must be premised at the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority;
- Public Office Bearers must sign conflict of interest policy statements on mining ventures or businesses as a way of ensuring transparency in the mining sector;
- Zimbabwe should fully adopt the Africa Mining Vision as a broad based framework for good and accountable mineral governance; and
- There is need for resocialisation through reshaping norms and values that maintain gender based violence within the mining sector.

Government Officials made the following submissions:

- The Government is currently doing a forensic audit on the missing \$15 billion mining revenue from Chiadzwa diamond fields in Manicaland although the auditors are finding it difficult to access critical data from the operating companies whose licenses had been revoked;
- Government is making strides to ensure local beneficiation of platinum as a way of managing risks of under-declaration of the ten minerals produced by platinum miners;

- The Government is making all efforts to improve the operating environment and enhance production capacity in the mining sector in line with value addition and beneficiation agenda enshrined in ZIMASSET and the 10 point Plan;
- Those who own land for speculative purposes are likely to lose it according to the use it or lose it policy aimed at enhancing mineral production;
- Miners should engage in sustainable mining; and after operations, mining rehabilitation should take place;
- The Ministry of Mines will ensure that farmer-miner rights and/or needs are balanced; An Interministerial committee comprising of all Ministries affected by Mining will be set up, to resolve farmer-miner conflicts; and
- Domestication of the Africa Mining Vision is a brilliant idea and the Government will speed up its implementation in order to address the loopholes in the mining sector and maximise value from the extraction of minerals.

ZIMCODD would like to express its profound gratitude to the development partners who channelled their resources for the success of the Indaba. Our appreciation also goes to all those who participated in this important event.

#Please note that the ZAMI Declaration will be submitted to the relevant authorities.

