

THE WEEKEND READER

“Your Weekly Read on Debt, Development & Social & Economic Justice”

5/13/22

2022 ALTERNATIVE MINING INDABA (AMI) RECONVENES ON A HIGH NOTE

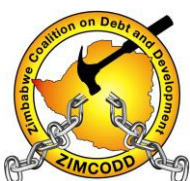


Mandla Hadebe (AMI Secretariat), gives his welcome address

This year’s Alternative Mining Indaba was convened from the 4th – 8th May (virtual) and 9th -11th of May 2022 in Cape Town, running under the theme, “**A just energy transition for sustainable mining communities in a climate crisis era**”. AMI brings together diverse stakeholders to deliberate on issues in the extractives sector to empower participants by building capacity of their home communities. AMI is a culmination of decentralized national processes that are undertaken in more than 12 Southern and East African countries. These national level processes are conducted at village, district and provincial levels reaching about 6000 participants and further cascading to an additional 8000 people indirectly through advocacy and campaign activities.

Levels of poverty and inequality continue to widen in most African countries whilst powerful multinational companies have continued to extract Africa’s mineral wealth for their benefit. The profits from minerals are channelled towards development in their countries of origin and mining host communities are left to hang dry. African governments have equally contributed to the exacerbation of Africans’ poverty and inequality levels through poor resource governance. This also includes lack of robust mining policies to address challenges faced by mining host communities, failure to curb resource leakages and the mining companies which then take advantage of the communities by not fulfilling their corporate social responsibility.

#AMI2022 incorporated the issue of climate change as it has a special bearing with the extractives sector. The need for urgent climate action has put the energy transition discourse at centre stage globally. The energy transition refers to the global energy shift from fossil-based systems of energy production and consumption including natural gas and coal to renewable energy sources like wind and solar as well as Lithium-ion batteries.



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The energy transition is a reality that has increasingly become a global imperative as the climate crisis deepens, with both challenges and opportunities presented for African countries.

#AMI2022 sought to address the just energy transition from an African perspective, to provide solidarity and support to mining communities who will be most affected by the increased extractive activities. #AMI2022 successfully created a dialogue platform for mining communities, civil society and extractives companies. In furtherance, future sessions should explicitly seek to create a capacity building space for mining communities, (especially vulnerable groups like women and girls) to ensure that policy and practice prioritizes people and the environment over profitmaking.

Quotes from #AMI2022

- *“AMI will continue to be a platform that advocates for the human rights of mining affected communities”.*
- *“Is Africa ready for a just transition?”*
- *“As part of addressing climate crisis, we need to decarbonize the mining sector as part of a just energy transition from fossil from fossil fuels” – The SARWatch Executive Director*
- *“COVID-19 reminded us of how vulnerable Africa is. AMI seeks to ensure that communities located in Africa’s rich resourced countries meaningfully participate in conversations on climate change and energy transition”.*
- *“Can Africa speak of just transition in a climate crisis when COVID-19 has negatively impacted mining communities on a continent with so many natural resources? this is a paradox for plenty”*
- *“Africa is not asking for charity from businesses, we just want respect of our human rights!”.*
- *“Community members know what they want, communities have been fighting mining companies for years but labour laws have not been changed we need inclusiveness in just transition”*

#AMI2022 Resolutions

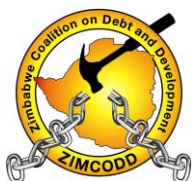
- **Inclusivity of Energy Transition Decision-making:** The grass-roots communities that are already using and relying on fossil fuels should be involved in decision-making processes that declare alternatives. ‘Nothing for us without us.’
- **Value Addition:** Proceeds of mining are subject to illicit financial flows and resultantly not benefitting host communities. Value addition within home countries will ensure creation of employment and improved livelihoods for local communities.
- **Strengthening Corporate Accountability:** There is an urgent need to hold Mining Corporates to engage in socioeconomic and environmental accountability. The status quo of repatriating proceeds of local resources without a care for host communities should end.
- **Ensuring Women’s ‘meaningful’ participation:** Women bear the brunt of the negative environmental, social and human rights implications of extractivism but they are absent in decision-making positions. More should be done to meaningfully incorporate women beyond tokenism.
- **Resuscitation of The Africa Mining Vision (AMV):** The AMV was a good instrument that never got to cascade to the grassroots communities it sought to serve. AMV should be revitalised with grassroots communities in mind.
- **Climate Financing:** Mining Corporations should be at the front of climate change financing as their activities have a significant causal bearing. A starting point is strengthening taxation of these large institutions to ensure they pay their fair share!



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#AMI2022 closed out with an actionable declaration developed and co-signed by conference attendees. This document will guide implementation of resolutions and be used to take stock in the next instalment of AMI.



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