

The 12th Edition of Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba roars to life – @ZAMI2023



Participants during the Youth Symposium 16/10/23

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) in partnership with Zimbabwe Environmental Lawyers Association (ZELA) and Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) is currently hosting the 12th Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI) from 16 to 20 October 2023. Kicking off the ZAMI, the ZCC co- convened the Youth Symposium and also held an Annual High-Level Engagement Meeting on Peace and Cohesion (HLEMPC) – 2023-2028. These events not only showcased the important role of the Church in the community agendas but also provided platforms for dialogue and addressing past hurts.

The youth symposium, held at the Enterprise Hotel, focused on natural resource governance, an issue that affects many young individuals who feel excluded from the decision-making processes in mining. Youths are facing employment challenges and resorting to negative coping as our minerals are extracted under a model failing to transformatively contribute to the Zimbabwean economy. 44 youths (20 males, 24 females) participated. The number is exclusive of other stakeholders and facilitators above 35 years of age.

The youth symposium allowed the youths to discuss and formulate strategies for becoming major players in natural resource governance. These strategies include policy advocacy and lobbying and continuous engagements with key stakeholders including the Ministry of Mines to create a specific desk for youth in mining.

As a precursor and part of ZAMI side events, the ZCC also convened a High Level Peace and Social Cohesion meeting, bringing together academia, traditional leaders, communities and civil society organisations to converse on issues of peace and cohesion for communities affected by past hurts and violence so as to establish and strengthen paths to justice, peace and reconciliation in our country.

Speaking at the Peace Building and Social Cohesion meeting, Professor Sifiso Mpfu, a renowned academic, highlighted the crucial role of the Church in addressing past wounds. He emphasized that unresolved issues of the past could potentially lead to future disasters if not addressed.

“There is need to include women and youths in peacebuilding dialogues especially from communities that were affected by past atrocities. Continuously ignoring these issues will not do good to the country as the issue will not be resolved and continue to affect the nation.”





Rev Wilfred Dimingu steering discussions at the HLEMP meeting 16/10/23

The High- Level meeting helped to shape strategies for the Church to respond to the issues of peace and cohesion that continues to be pressing for the country.

To celebrate the start of the ZAMI, a welcoming dinner was organized at the Enterprise Hotel for all ZCC participants from the communities. During the dinner, the Clergy, lay leaders and members of the ZCC Supervisory Council from mining communities were encouraged to become ambassadors of their communities. The ZCC envisions a society where everyone benefits from the country's rich mineral resources, and it is through the collective effort of social actors such as the Church that this can be achieved.

The ZAMI is an annual platform where vulnerable communities affected by mining activities engages with various stakeholders, including mining companies and government ministries. Through these engagements, challenges faced by these communities can be highlighted and solutions collectively developed. The solutions collated during the ZAMI will be consolidated in the declaration and informs policy and local engagements post the ZAMI.

The young people resolved that they need to push for the designing of mining taxes and royalties that stimulate local value addition and youths to be represented and visible in mining boards governing mining affairs in the country. In addition, young people need to undertake initiatives to ensure a just energy transition by occupying the climate justice agenda. Continuous engagement with key stakeholders in communities to address mining related challenges that affect youths were also encouraged.

The youths further encouraged the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development at District and Provincial Levels to set up a Youth Desks that will assist youths to easily access mining opportunities.

The ZCC plays a crucial role in facilitating constructive dialogue, advocating for the interests of marginalized communities, and ensuring that their voices are heard.