

# 13th Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba kicks off: Celebrating Diverse Voices in Mining.

**29 October 2024**



The 13th edition of the Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba roared into life in the city of Kings on the 29th of October bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders –Civil Society Organisations, government ministries, mining companies, industry experts, private sector and the communities.

Themed **“Putting Communities First for Community Development,”** this year’s (ZAMI), convened by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD), and the Zimbabwe Environmental Lawyers Association (ZELA), aims to reform the mining sector. This year’s ZAMI focuses on addressing the negative impacts of mining activities on host communities and advocating for greater community benefit-sharing.

The conference will provide a platform for dialogue, advocacy and collaboration between communities and mining companies over the next four days.

In a speech read on her behalf during the opening ceremony, Bulawayo Resident Minister Judith Ncube, indicated that mining sector contributes significantly to the economy of the country and should be focused on community development.

*“Currently, mining accounts for more than 60% of exports and contributes around 15% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) making Zimbabwe a resource-driven economy. Mining has played a pivotal role in Zimbabwean economic history by providing direct and indirect benefits towards human development. The mining sector gives the nation the impetus to achieve vision 2030,”* she said.

The ZCC President, Bishop Ignatius Makumbe in his theological reflection, emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability in the extractive sector highlighting the need for communities to benefit from the natural resources within their areas.

*“The notion of just energy transition should be treated with caution; the critical question is who needs this transition? Are Zimbabweans aware of this transition when they are still using firewood as a source of energy? Are we ready for an Energy transition without addressing the critical energy gaps; thus, we should question is this a new colonial agenda,”* said Rev Makumbe.

The ZAMI also gave a platform for communities to interface with government ministries and mining companies, sharing their experiences and insights, highlighting the challenges they face and proposing sustainable solutions.

Speaking at the same event Chief Bvute of Mberengwa Midlands Province urged the government to consult the local leadership first before parceling out mining licenses to the mining companies as it brings confusion to the communities.

*“Imagine someone coming to you with a prospecting license, pointing at land that holds the graves of your ancestors. The government must prioritize community consultation before granting such licenses, as we are the rightful custodians of our land,”* he said.

The ceremony opened with electrifying performances from an arts group Inkululeko Yabatsha School of Arts (IYASA) and renowned poet and musician Albert Nyathi, addressing issues of natural resource governance in their performances.