

The Youth Symposium in Hindsight; Empowering Youth for a Sustainable Mining Future



Youths have set the 13th edition of the Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI) in motion as they shared their aspirations for meaningful engagement and participation in the mining value chain at the Youth Symposium held at Rainbow Hotel in Bulawayo recently.

Inspired by its theme, **“Empowering Youth for a Sustainable Mining Future: Amplifying Voices, Building Solutions,”** the youth symposium provided a platform for a discussion on meaningful youth participation, especially youths from different mining host communities across the country, in mining activities at different levels.

Chief Marozva from Bikita District graced the event, emphasizing the need for meaningful youth engagement in rural areas. He highlighted the importance of empowering young people to participate actively in discussions about the environmental impact of mining and its link to social and environmental hazards.

He also stressed the importance of involving youth in the mining sector, especially those from the areas where mining activities are happening to ensure a more sustainable future.

“Most youths from host communities are excluded from decision-making spaces on mining yet they are the ones being affected by these mining activities. Rural youths suffer the double tragedy of exclusion from mining and advocacy. They remain poor and less informed. We must work to include all youth, as they are most affected,” said Chief Marozva.

Speaking at the same event, the Chief Executive Officer of the Young Miners Foundation, Mr. Payne Kupfuwa, encouraged young people to actively participate in the mining sector by acquiring mining rights. He emphasised that by becoming miners themselves, young people could make a significant contribution to the industry.

“Youth must actively participate in mining activities rather than being passive observers. The industry needs young, innovative minds, and your involvement can significantly contribute to the country's economic growth,” he said.

At the end of the symposium, the youth participants drafted a declaration outlining key insights and recommendations which included:

1.The government of Zimbabwe through relevant ministries should ensure adherence to regional and national legal frameworks specifically for youth participation and empowerment. These include the Africa Youth Charter which emphasizes that there should be deliberate efforts to Train young people to take up agricultural, mineral, commercial, and industrial production.

2.The Church and Civil Society Organisations should design innovative high-impact programs to empower youths to participate in key decision-making processes at the local level. The role played by the Church and CSOs in the youth participation discourse cannot be undermined and these have taken the responsibility to empower youths hence their interventions should also relate to what stimulates young people to participate in such spaces.

3. There is a need for the revision of Zimbabwe’s taxation system that is skewed against ordinary people, especially youths but there are no clear parameters on the tax brackets that are just and promote equity and repair of the infrastructure that has been negatively affected by mining activities.

4. There is a need for deliberate action to raise awareness and have access to relevant mining-related information, especially for youths in rural areas

