

A Poetic Plea for Responsible Mining

30 October 2024



The official opening of the 13th Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI) at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Bulawayo was a platform for diverse voices to converge and address critical issues in the mining sector.

One such voice was that of renowned poet and musician, Albert Nyathi, who delivered a powerful performance reminding the audience of the need to balance resource extraction with community well-being. He challenged the miners to consider responsible mining, avoiding unnecessary tree cutting down whenever they do their mining and making sure that they give back to the environment after their activities.

“These wounds are not easy to heal, these wounds might take forever to heal. It takes decades to grow a tree and yet it takes a split second to destroy the same tree. As we seek fortune from the belly of the earth let us not forget to do land replenishing, land reclamations, and afforestation. How will Mother Earth breathe when we continue to puncture her lungs every day without due

and afforestation. How will Mother Earth breathe when we continue to puncture her lungs every day without due care”

Nyathi's words highlighted the need for mining companies to prioritise the interests of local communities and urged mining companies to avoid exploiting natural resources without considering the long-term consequences for the environment and the people.

“Miners do not bite the nipple whose breast you are feeding on. That is where your nourishment is coming from,” he added.

His words captured the frustration and despair felt by many who have witnessed the destructive impact of irresponsible mining across the length and breadth of Zimbabwe.

“Mining can be a solution to our problems, but let not mining be our problem, be our headache. Mining is an eyesore as I walk around, how do I become proud of the earth's endless wounds,” he said.



Nyathi's performance was also buttressed by IYASA through its performances chronicling the challenges being faced by communities in which mining activities are taking place.

These performances inspired many attendees, sparking discussions about the ethical implications of mining and the need for sustainable development.

As the ZAMI conference unfolded, it became clear that Nyathi's and IYASA's message was a timely reminder that the pursuit of economic growth must be balanced with social justice and environmental protection.

