



## Zimbabwe Women and Youth Training and Symposium on Transitional Minerals



25 and 26 July 2023

## INTRODUCTION

The Southern African Resource Watch (SARW), in partnership with Green Governance Trust Zimbabwe (GreenGov), hosted a workshop on July 25th and 26th, 2023, in Masvingo. Participants in the workshop included women and youth, a councillor from the Goromonzi Rural District Council, the headman (sabhuku), farm owners, the community chairperson, and the village head. On the second day, key stakeholders from the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, Masvingo Media Center, TellZim, Hevoi FM, GZU Campus Radio, and representatives from government stakeholders such as EMA and the Ministry of Youth were also present.

The Transitional Minerals Training Workshop and Symposium was designed to teach participants to understand lithium's sustainable and responsible supply chain and its central role in the clean energy transition in Zimbabwe and beyond. The primary goal of the Symposium was to create a platform allowing dialogue, information sharing, engagement, and identification of solutions to climate governance and just energy transition in Zimbabwe. The activity also aimed at promoting community rights monitoring and movement building, improving coordination, and consolidating advocacy on climate issues by various actors.

The meeting was divided into two parts. The first part was a training session for community women and youth to oversee the extraction of critical minerals in Zimbabwe, particularly in Bikita, Mutoko, and Goromonzi. The training aimed to equip the monitors with the skills to conduct monitoring actions and oversee any Women and Youth's Human Rights violations during the extraction process. The second part was a symposium designed to provide a space for dialogue and idea-sharing, focusing on challenges, perspectives, and collective actions to improve the rights of women and youth involved in lithium extraction in Zimbabwe. Overall, the workshop aimed to create a space where participants could engage in meaningful conversations about lithium mining and its impact on their communities.

### SYNOPSIS OF DAY 1: The Training

On the first day, women and youth from Bikita, Mutoko, and Goromonzi in Zimbabwe received training on transitional minerals. These communities were identified as lithium mining areas. The training addressed the need for more knowledge and capacity among community members to participate in discussions related to transitional minerals. Additionally, the training aimed to enable the communities to develop demands related to transitional minerals so that their concerns can be incorporated into ongoing policy conversations. This will ensure that they are included in the potential benefits that may arise from lithium mining in their communities.

### Summary of presentations

The opening presentation highlighted how mining activities have always caused the displacement of indigenous people in areas where the minerals are discovered and the plight of women and youth in the mining sector. The presentation took antecedence into the general overview of the historical background of mining in Africa: energy transition and transitional minerals, climate change, the economic position of the mining sector in Zimbabwe, and the importance of lithium and mineral beneficiation.

The presentation highlighted that:

- Western countries have greater knowledge and information on minerals available in Zimbabwe than indigenous people.
- There are over 90 minerals across Zimbabwe, but only a few are fully exploited.
- Ministry of Mines and Mining Development by book has only managed to record 60% of minerals available in the country.
- The mining sector backs 70% of the national budget.
- Zimbabwe's top five export earners are minerals gold, platinum, diamond, chrome and lithium.
- Zimbabwe ranks as the 10<sup>th</sup> most significant supplier of minerals in the continent.
- On mineral resources revenue as of 2019, Zimbabwe generated USD\$9.77 billion from mineral exports.

A presentation on Climate Change and Problems Associated with Climate Change started with participants defining climate change, which by many was similarly illustrated as the variations in the natural state of weather elements which cause several natural disasters caused by extreme temperatures. Information was shared on the trends in the rise of natural disasters over 100 years because of climate change. Essential factors driving climate change discussed include

massive industrialisation that causes global warming. Immense industrialisation during the Industrial Revolution in developed countries meant the emission of carbon dioxide gas from burning fossil fuels like oil, coal, and gas and deforestation.

Problems associated with climate change that were presented with visual illustrations included:

- Floods
- Flooding coastal areas
- Melting ice
- Coral bleaching
- Drought
- Species loss
- Rise in sea-level

During the presentation, the participants discussed the contribution of different continents to climate change. They agreed that Asia and North America were the most significant contributors, while Africa contributed the least due to poor industrialisation. The conclusion was that despite having a development fever, those who contribute the least are most affected by the effects of climate change. The moderator also shared important information on the Congo Basin in Africa and the Amazon Rain Forest in Brazil as the most extensive forests that remain in a natural state to assist in reducing the effects of climate change. He referred to them as the 'lungs of the earth'.

During the workshop, the topic of energy transition was discussed. This refers to the shift from using fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. However, this transition requires critical minerals such as copper, lithium and cobalt.

A presentation was given to illustrate the demand for lithium over time. In 2010 only 23,500 tons of lithium were required for making ceramics and glass. But with the discovery of using spodumene for making renewable lithium batteries, the demand for lithium rose to 93,000 tons in 2021. The presentation also highlighted that critical minerals are essential for manufacturing products like lithium-ion batteries, which are used for storing solar energy and powering electric vehicles. The aim is to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2055.

The workshop emphasised China's role as the most significant player in the energy transition, with global demand for critical minerals like lithium at the top of the value chain. Participants questioned whether Zimbabwe was part of the transition and how lithium mining communities in Bikita, Goromonzi, and Mutoko could benefit from the transition. Key takeaway on the Energy Transition topic:

- Reduces carbon emissions.
- Drive towards renewable forms of energy for clean and high-efficiency power.
- Reduces dependency on energy imports.
- Growth of lithium consumption
- Need for action on climate justice.
- Socio-economic justice and how women and youth can also be accommodated in the lithium value chain in Zimbabwe.
- Zimbabwe's role in the energy transition is mainly the supply of lithium mineral ore.

During the session, it was brought to attention that the growing demand for lithium comes with various challenges. These included environmental impacts, risks to labour, economic and social disruption, security challenges, issues with land acquisition, African countries being at the bottom of the value chain, and lack of access to remedy. It was also mentioned by a farm owner from Bikita, where the largest lithium deposits are recorded, that corrupt activities such as bribery are on the rise.

Residents living in communities where lithium mining projects occur shared several grievances. These include issues with dust from the mines, obstacles in their participation as stewards of the resources, poor communication from government authorities, lack of transparency regarding the beneficiation of the help, and political polarization.

During a discussion, one youth brought up an issue that causes an imbalance in the benefits of lithium mining in their communities. The problem arises from poverty, which limits their ability to stand up for better working conditions and remunerations. Participants also discussed drawbacks to fulfilling beneficiation, including uncoordinated voices,

underground tax to community leaders, deferred tax by the mining companies, lack of legally binding Corporate Social Responsibility, and a lack of knowledge among community members on defending their interests.

During the presentation on Human Rights Monitoring, the moderator provided a background on human rights. The presentation began by highlighting that human rights were created by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Human rights are inherent to all people, apolitical and non-discriminatory based on gender, ethnicity, or race. The moderator emphasised that the State is responsible for protecting, respecting, and fulfilling human rights. This can be achieved by overseeing its various institutions to ensure that they maintain a human rights-watching mentality.

Key takeaways from defining Human Rights:

- Every human being has rights.
- Human rights are only valid if they don't affect the next person.
- They are interdependent, which means they complement each other.
- The government is there to respect and protect the rights of its citizens.

Human Rights Monitoring refers to the systematic and routine collection of information on human rights and their use in protecting them. The aim of discussing human rights monitoring is to encourage community-based monitoring in mining communities. To ensure the preservation of human rights in lithium mining communities, local players should monitor mining investors in their operations to ensure that they do not violate the inherent rights of people living where mining activities occur. It was noted that factors affecting the rights of local people from mining activities include environmental impacts that infringe on their right to a safe environment.

During the presentation on human rights monitoring, it was highlighted that having local monitors can be advantageous. They can substantially assist Civil Society Organizations and governments in monitoring institutions and communities involved in lithium mining. This information is essential to develop solutions to prevent human rights infringement by the investors involved in these mining activities. The community monitors can provide grassroots and convincing statistics on human rights violations caused by multinational corporations and domestic investors.

Challenges to successful Human Rights Monitoring: Fear of victimisation by political players, community members with leadership responsibilities and the private sector were also brought into view following a question by the moderator. Contributions by participants comprised victims who fear testifying their plight, which they need to be guaranteed by organising safeguards from the CSOs and government-responsible institutions.

To address the challenges faced in local mining areas, providing human rights capacity building to community members is essential. This can be achieved through self-empowerment by familiarising them with specific legislation. By doing so, they will be better equipped to detect poor handling of human rights in their areas.

The presentation also established important principles of quality monitoring at a community level:

- Do not harm; it was discussed that monitors should, at all costs, avoid lengths of inciting harm to community members under the pretence of human rights justice.
- Respecting confidentiality and ensuring informed consent.
- Respecting security standards and exercising good judgement of Human Rights violations.
- Respecting the government and mining authority's engagement protocols and maintaining impartial

Maintaining credibility is crucial in Human Rights Monitoring, as the presentation emphasises. It further highlighted that it becomes challenging to regain once credibility is lost. Investors may use this to win cases of violation.

Poverty was identified as a significant challenge that often leads community members to overlook violations of their rights. For instance, participants highlighted how mine workers are forced to work for wages below the Poverty Datum Line without proper remuneration, protective clothing, or the freedom to join Workers' Associations that advocate for better working conditions.

The legal framework was found to have significant weaknesses that undermine its provisions for human rights protection and monitoring, and it also needs to gain awareness of the rights violations that occur within the mining sector.

During a community meeting, one of the participants suggested implementing certified training courses for individuals who can act as human rights monitors. Additionally, it was proposed that essential human rights monitoring be included in the school curriculum to educate the community from an early age. This effort can have a national-level impact.

During the proceedings on Day 1, the discussion also revolved around the position of Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners in the country's fiscal space. The discussion touched on their past experiences, their methods of extracting lithium ore, and the state of their market. Artisanal miners involved in lithium mining expressed their desire for the government to intervene in a manner that could have allowed them to contribute to the economy legally.

The conversation also addressed the challenges and experiences of illegal artisanal gold mining (chikorokoza). The Bikita, Goromonzi, and Mutoko participants, especially the youth and women, approached the conversation with emotional sensitivity. They expressed how they made a living from artisanal mining despite not having proper legal paperwork to mine lithium. They sold the lithium to Chinese fortune seekers who got the ore at minimal rates.

Raised concerns:

- The government registers artisanal small-scale miners of lithium using measures that locals can afford and offers them the first choice of lithium prospecting licence.
- The government should provide locals access to machinery, loans and skills to boost their lithium mining production.

## **SYNOPSIS OF DAY 2: THE SYMPOSIUM**

The day was dedicated to presenting and getting critical responses by invited representatives of selected government authorities. The authorities participating in the symposium included the Ministry Of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation Environmental Management Agency.

The following Key Asks to Experts and Authorities were done, and these were based on issues that were discussed on the first day of the workshop.

### **Environmental Management Agency**

*Q1. Why does EMA exclude local stakeholders in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes?*

- The representative from EMA responded to the question that on the EIA document, they conduct consultation but merely with the owner of the property in question before passing their EMA license. She also explained that before being allowed to operate, the Investor submits a six-chapter document, as requested by the agency, on environmental aspects of the area and mining operations to be carried out. EIA, by law, is confidential and can only be accessed on special request to the director general EMA.

*Q2. What is your position on environmental rehabilitation within the mining sector? Does EMA have a policy concerning environmental rehabilitation?*

- As part of their responsibilities, the EMA rep stressed that they could monthly or quarterly request environmental reports and carry out physical visits, considering the risks the existing mining operations may pose.
- She also pointed out that Section 97-103 of the Environmental Management Act provides ways to preserve the environment from mining activities. On offences in the mining sector, they issue environmental protection orders on the realisation of an activity that affects the environment.

*Q3. How does EMA ensure environmental rehabilitation after a mining company has closed?*

- Environmental rehabilitation, Chapter 4 of EIA provides for an environmental management plan, and Chapter 6 decommissioning plan. Mining companies propose and submit even before they start mining production.
- However, they can rehabilitate pits left by illegal artisanal miners (makorokoza).

*Q4. Is EMA conducting constant lab tests on water sources within mining communities?*

- EMA is said to conduct regular ambient water monitoring of water sources and is usually completed monthly in areas where water contamination may be at high risk or when a report has been passed.

*Q5. What measures has EMA put in place to curb corruption in its operations?*

As part of their Standard Operating Procedures, EMA officials must attend cases with at least one other person or more to prevent malpractice. Interested stakeholders can also join as immediate monitors to ensure transparency and fairness in the proceedings.

Follow-up questions were answered collectively since most were just developed to the initial question that had been asked before.

1. Did Bikita Minerals submit EIA? - She responded they were submitted in 5 separate documents.
2. What is the fee for reviewing EIA? – She answered that it was issued at a price before, but after some court proceedings, it is now free of charge but still on request for approval to the Director General and can only be reviewed during work hours from 8 am-4 pm at the agency boardroom.
3. How long does it take to acquire an EIA license? – According to the agency representative, the process comes in two stages: a prospectus, which, under normal circumstances, the application should take at least 20 days, and grade 2, which takes approximately 15 days, the standard period if everything is in place should take no less than 35 working days.

The EMA representative generally stressed important issues that participants were burning to comprehend. She mentioned that their responsibilities mainly focus on water output, and extraction responsibilities belong to ZINWA.

Suggestions from the participants:

- The agency should develop schemes for rehabilitation, perhaps ‘a rehabilitation fund’ from fees on quarterly reports in case of decommission in which the miner is absolute and cannot afford to conduct the environmental rehabilitation plan proposed by the EIA.
- General problems noted from EMA operations included areas for improvement in the legal framework and poor transparency conduct on the EIA.
- Information officers in government agencies must fully initiate their responsibilities to provide important information to the public.
- Another participant suggested commissioning a parallel document that can be shared with the public.
- EMA consultation processes should represent at least 30 families within the mining area.
- The agency should encourage traditional leaders and council officials to play a vital role in representation.

### **Ministry Of Youth, Arts and Recreation**

*Q1. What is the government’s position on youth empowerment within the mining sector? E.g., empowerment and skills training.*

Their position in representing youths in the mining sector – they capacity building programs through ministry Vocational training centres that offer empowerment skill-based education and community outreach skills programmes in rural areas.

*Q2. How does the ministry monitor youth empowerment programs? Statistical evidence of young people who have been empowered through various initiatives?*

Interns monitoring youth inclusion have youth focal desks that integrate different projects by the youth in their respective communities.

*Q3. How is the ministry factoring in the youth quarter system enshrined in the national youth policy within the mining sector?*

She didn't have much to contribute to the Quota system since she stated that commenting on policy was initially above her level. However, she encouraged the youth to familiarise themselves with the policy as an approach to self-empowerment.

*Q4. Why is the Ministry of Youth allocated 1% of the national budget, and what is that percentage used for?*

The 1% allocation from the national budget was also beyond the Ministry of Youth Admin officer to comment.

*Q5. Where are young people placed within the lithium value chain?*

The ministry is mainly into general empowerment of the youth in various aspects of the mining sector, be it gold, chrome or lithium mining, and is not specified to any mining initiative. However, they conduct several projects to initiate youth participation in the economy.

*Q6. What safety measures have been implemented for young people in artisanal mining?*

Youth Artisanal Small-Scale Miners, the ministry believes in incorporating youths in all facets of the economy, including the mining sector. They have conducted projects that provide essential PPE for youth in mining.

Given that the symposium was done a few weeks towards the elections in Zimbabwe, only some experts and invited government stakeholders managed to come; the others issued apologies. However, for a follow-up of the question from the workshop that they were supposed to answer, it was agreed that the media that participated in the symposium would write on the key Asks whilst Green Gov was going to solicit responses.

A policy brief was agreed as a critical outcome of this meeting that will also ensure that the key Asks will be turned into policy issues that will be submitted to the different policymakers.