



BLACK GRANITE MINING: MUTOKO DEMANDS DEVELOPMENT SHARE

By Simiso Mlevu Posted June 30, 2020 In Campaigns

Mutoko villagers have called on granite mining companies to proactively contribute to the district's development initiatives. The call was made during an all stakeholders held at Chief Mutoko's court on Friday last week.

The meeting brought together five of the nine granite mining companies, traditional leaders, political leaders, the local authority and representatives of government departments based in Mutoko.

Held under strict adherence to the Public Health (COVID-19 Prevention, Containment and Treatment) Order, the indaba was convened by Shine Faith Based organisation, an organisation capacitated by Centre for Natural Resource Governance over the past three years, in conjunction with the district's traditional and political leadership.

In his opening remarks, Chief Mutoko noted that his area is blessed with black granite which has attracted investors from all over the world to extract the stone.

He implored companies to challenge themselves into thinking of the legacy they are going to leave for the people of Mutoko and reiterated that foreign companies brought expertise which should be converted into tangible development for the Mutoko people and the nation at large.

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Mutoko North legislator, Hon Rambidzai Nyabote said the legacy of black granite mining companies is environmental degradation and deforestation, a blatant violation of Section 73 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which guarantees environmental rights for the citizens.

“Mutoko North has 43 schools, of which 25 are primary schools and 18 are secondary schools. Of the 25 primary schools, 19 schools do not have access to water and eight do not have electricity. Three clinics in the constituency do not have running water.”

Hon Nyabote implored mining companies to embrace devolution in letter and spirit and channel some of the resources towards uplifting the district out of poverty.

He called for the establishment of a Mutoko North revolving fund where all companies will deposit development funds to be channelled towards development projects in the area.

Acting District Administrator, Ms Chidarikire called for progressive engagement and the setting of time framed resolutions adding that talk without implementation never produces results.

Representatives of Natural Stone Export Company; Ilford Services Mining Company; Quarrying Enterprises; CRG Quarries and New Obsidian Granite all welcomed the establishment of a development fund for the district and suggested that contributions to be made per cubic. This, the companies argued, will ensure that each company's contribution is commensurate to its production.

The companies revealed that development funds are continuously drained by politicians and government departments that always demand donations in the form of diesel and money for their activities within the district. Company representatives also called for transparency and accountability in the management of the development fund and indicated that their association, Dimension Stone Producers Association (DSPA) will second a representative to the development committee.

Shine Faith Based Organisation's director, Reverend Mhosira who is also the chairperson of the Zimbabwe National Resource Council said natural resources are the real wealth of nations and are the natural capital out of which other forms of capital are made, and as such should contribute towards development and poverty reduction in Mutoko.

CNRG POSITION



CNRG notes with concern that government and politicians demands donations from extractive companies and this undermines its regulatory role and explains why so many companies operate outside the law and why government does not hold them to account. Consequently government ends up facilitating illicit financial flows by helping companies to avoid paying taxes because they pay politicians and government departments. Mining companies have thus become undeclared funders of political parties.



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