

Mining doesn't benefit African communities, AMI says

The Africa Mining Vision (AMV) has been sponsored by outside agencies and could become a model to allow corporations to continue looting Africa's resources.

Executive director of Bench Marks Foundation, John Capel noted that there had been robust debate during the Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI) about the AMV, a United Nations' Economic Commission for Africa document that was adopted in 2008.

The AMI, which is in its eighth year, meets concurrently with the African Mining Indaba, at which civil society is not represented.



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Building community power

Too many governments in Africa have become part of the problem through their political patronage, whereas they should be representing people and their needs. "The revolving doors between governments and multi-national corporations conflict governments in their oversight roles," he said.

Mining is therefore not working for the people of Africa and current mining practices are causing harm and damage to the health, wellbeing and survival of communities on the continent.

He added that the only effective way to bring benefits to the people of Africa was to build up community power and monitoring capacity.

Companies were urged to recognise that traditional leaders are not community members and therefore need to carry out proper and thorough consultation with communities.

African governments should also actively shift from the export of raw minerals to domestic value addition in order to create jobs and better linkages between the extractive sector and the broader national economies.

The role of electric vehicles

Capel noted that the advent of electric-powered cars would open up a huge demand for new minerals in Africa.

“It’s important to watch that this development does not lead to the developed northern countries benefitting at the expense of Africa,” he said.

Call to African governments

A resolution at the end of the indaba was due to be delivered to the Mining Indaba following a march by delegates to its meeting place. It included the following calls for African governments to:

- develop an optimal land-use framework to determine whether mining should or not take place in a particular area;
- push harder for stronger and better regulatory institutions to ensure that the benefits of extraction are shared equitably; and
- employ taxation as an important strategic tool to foster linkages between mining activities and the large national economy.

On environmental, artisanal and small-scale mining and social protection, the indaba resolved to urge African governments to:

- let aside part of revenues from extractive industries to fund basic income/grants to vulnerable groups in society; and
- legislate corporate social responsibility programmes and not view them as philanthropic practices by the private sector.

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