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PRESS STATEMENT

CEJ LAUNCHES TRUTH BE TOLD CAMPAIGN, DIALOGUE FOR KABWE LEAD EXPOSURE

Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) has launched a 'Truth Be Told Campaign' to reveal issues surrounding the historical Lead Poison in Kabwe District, Central Province.

CEJ Executive Director Maggie Mwape says her organisation and its allied partners will work closely with government in ensuring that the truth about lead in Kabwe is unearthed, find solutions and that accountability for the damage is set right.

Ms. Mwape says the Kabwe Lead issue is a national environmental crisis which calls for sincere conversation and dialogue to come up with lasting solutions. "Let's have a sincere conversation and dialogue. Remediation can't be successful when damage is still active," she said. She says it is sad that Kabwe town has been labelled by the UN as one of the most polluted city on earth.

Ms Mwape has since urged interested stakeholders to collaborate with CEJ as it strives to contribute to putting an end to the Kabwe lead issue.

She calls for the need to strengthen remediation approaches and hold accountable those that were responsible for the crime against humanity and nature. Ms Mwape says countless lives have been lost as a result of such huge negligence and lack of urgency to resolve the Kabwe Lead poisoning scandal. "On behalf of the Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ), it's my great pleasure for me today to officially launch the Truth Be Told Campaign," she said.

Ms Mwape said specifically, the campaign would focus on the History disclosure of the mine operations, Public Health for Kabwe Communities, Compliance and enforcement, Rehabilitation and Remediation achievements and Compensations. She added that the Truth Be Told Campaign would essentially be led by the most affected parties to lead exposure in Kabwe; the women and youth. "The Truth Be Told Campaign is having five (5) strategic questions for all interested and concerned multi-stakeholder;

- i. Who is Responsible for Lead Poison in Kabwe?
- ii. What is the status of the Lead poisoning cleaning initiative?
- iii. How can the people of Kabwe be compensated and in what format?
- iv. What's the Lead Poisoning History in Kabwe and has the truth been told?
- v. What has been the level of disclosure to current and past residents of Kabwe?" Ms Mwape said.

The CEJ Executive Director stated that CEJ believes that transparency and accountability were critical key components in the extractive industries.

"For over three (3) decades now, the beautiful township of Kabwe has been affected by some of the most devastating impacts of lead exposure. Kabwe's mine dates to the colonial period: a British company opened the lead mine in 1904," she said.

Ms Mwape recalled that a South African company took over in 1925 and remained in charge for nearly half a century adding that Zambia later nationalised the mine, and then closed it in 1994.

"But there was no comprehensive clean-up and our efforts at CEJ are driven by our core mandate of creating platforms and processes that promote community access to quality and accurate information on environmental protection, extractive industries, sustainable energy, climate change, agriculture and water access with the ultimate aim of enhancing accountability for better decision making and sustainable development as well as a support safe and adaptive environment as basic fundamental human rights to having a better and prosperous livelihood," she said.

"We must put in place new systems that will respond to the damage caused by Lead Mining in Kabwe," she said. Ms Mwape said international experience showed that inclusive and transparent institutions formed the basis of shared and sustainable prosperity.

Issued By:

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