

Friday, Lusaka (13th October, 2023)



FQM SPENDS \$6M ON PROTECTING WEST LUNGA NATIONAL PARK

First Quantum Minerals (FQM) Country Manager Godwin Beene says his mining firm is disturbed by citizens who are deliberately burning forest landscapes and grasslands adopted by the mine for environmental conservation.

Dr. Beene said some people recently walked into a protected game management area and set the area ablaze.

He said chiefs still have the royal authority to stop bushfires adding that FQM will do everything possible to join efforts with Traditional Leaders to enforce environmental protection.

Meanwhile, FQM Trident Limited Environment Manager Kachiwala Sapaulo said the company has spent Six Million Dollars to protect a rare tree species called Mavunda in North Western Province.

Mr. Sapaulo said FQM Trident, Popularly known as Kalumbila, has Surface Rights amounting to 385 Square kilometers of which only 100 Square kilometers is currently being disturbed through mining.

He said the company realized that minerals are resources given to citizens by God for sustainable development but that FQM is mining in a responsible manner.

"In the 100 square kilometers that is mined, we conduct restoration on an annual basis. For an area which is developed where we will not go back, we begin rehabilitation and planting of trees to reinstitute the Environment to what it was," he said.

Mr. Sapaulo said the mining sector has learnt lessons especially on the Copperbelt, where there were national forests as well.

"If you go to Ndola and Kitwe, what used to be forests are now real estate. We therefore, adopted forests, not within our mining areas, some very close others very far," he said.

The FQM Trident Environment Manager said the mine is surrounded by two National forests accounting for 1400 Square kilometers which have been adopted in collaboration with the Forestry Department.

"This is to ensure that we avoid a repeat of what happened on the Copperbelt," he said.

Mr. Sapaulo said FQM adopted the West Lunga National Park in collaboration with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW).

"Those are our offsets as we are investing in taking real actions to mitigate the impact that we have at our operations. Large mammals like elephants have returned to the national park," he said.

Mr. Sapaulo said FQM Trident also planted 40 000 plants in the last planting season to respond to Environmental Protection issues.

He disclosed that FQM is 100% compliant on paying the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF).

This came to light during a Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) Traditional Leaders Caucus in Lusaka held under the theme 'Strengthening Traditional Leaders Role in Carbon Financing for Sustainable Development in Zambia.

Issued By: CEJ Communications Unit

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