

Wednesday, Serenje (13th December, 2023)



GOVERNMENT DEMANDS RESPONSIBLE MINING IN SERENJE TO PROTECT ENVIRONMENT

Government has called for responsible mining in the manganese mineral rich Serenje District, Central Province, in order to safeguard the environment.

Serenje Town Council, Council Secretary, Stan Mwanakayaya, says Government is embracing the benefits of mining, but that stakeholders must also focus on sustainable development that ensures the well-being of citizens and preserve cultural heritage.

Mr. Mwanakayaya said Serenje Town Council is committed to working collaboratively with Organisations like Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ), Government Officials and Industry Representatives to strike a balance that promotes economic growth while safeguarding the environment and the Rights of community members.

He said this in a speech read on his behalf by Serenje Town Council District Planning Officer, Mwamba Mukupa, at a Community Symposium organised by Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) through the Resilient Initiatives for Sustainable Environment (RISE) Project Supported by Bread for the World (BFTW) of Germany.

"As we engage in the discussions today, let us keep in mind the delicate balance we must strike. I extend my gratitude to CEJ for organising this Community Symposium, a platform bringing together key stakeholders to address Environmental challenges posed by mining in the region," he said.

The Council Secretary said mining plays a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of the District as it brings forth opportunities for development and growth, through providing jobs and contributing significantly to the global economy.

"However, with mining benefits comes responsibilities to ensure sustainable balanced future for communities. Let us first acknowledge the undeniable impacts that mining has on the environment," he said.

Mr. Mwanakayaya said it is imperative to address the ecological disruption, water pollution and habitat degradation.

"As a community, we must work hand in hand with the mining industry to implement stringent environmental practices to mitigate negative impacts of mining to preserve the beauty of Serenje for generations to come. Equally important is recognising the social impact that mining has on the vulnerable groups in communities. The vulnerable groups struggle with disruption of their daily lives, health Implications, or challenges in accessing education. As we discuss the benefits of mining, we must also address challenges to find ways to inclusively distribute the benefits among all members of society," he said.

And Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) Board Member Emmanuel Mutamba paid tribute to Bread for the World (BFTW) of Germany for providing resources towards the Resilient Initiatives for Sustainable Environment (RISE) Project being implemented by CEJ in Serenje and Sinazongwe Districts.

"I'm grateful to Persons With Disabilities (PWDs), Village Headmen, the youth, Government Officials, Civic Leaders and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for attending the symposium," he said.

Mr. Mutamba said mining can be beneficial if all systems were followed.

"We are well endowed with mineral resources but because we have little or no capacity to execute large scale mining, we had to attract those with financial muscles to help us mine. Us people in mining communities, there is a way we must benefit from mining houses. This Community Symposium is important to dissect ways in which we must benefit from mining. We must know how women, the youth, current children and future generations will benefit from mining," he said.

He said the Community Symposium was necessary to understand challenges mining poses to water bodies in Serenje.

"We must introspect how agriculture will be affected if mining regulations are ignored. We need to know if mining will improve roads or worsen the situation. How will mining Improve the welfare of pupils in schools? Whatever we will discuss here will be taken as important recommendations," he said.

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